

MASMID



YESHIVA
COLLEGE



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To
Dr. Alexander Litman



IN RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION OF

the inspired teaching under trying circumstances, that has instilled in us his love for scholarship,

the friendly counsel, that has been of invaluable aid to us during our college years,

the genuine concern for the welfare of Yeshiva College and the furtherance of its ideals, that has been infused into us, and

the sincere devotion to the student body, that has forged an inseparable bond of friendship between us,

THIS MASMID IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.





M A S M I D



(Seated) David W. Petegorsky, David W. Gordon, Louis Leifer, Av Greenberg.
(Standing) Lester M. Silverman, Irving Ribner, Joseph Jaffe, Jerome B. Gordon.

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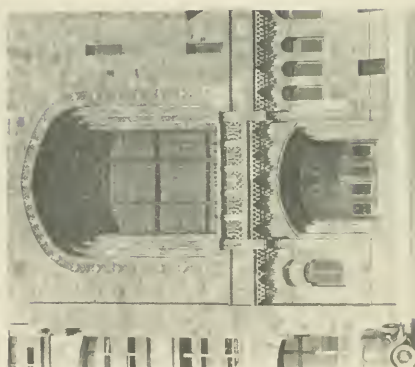
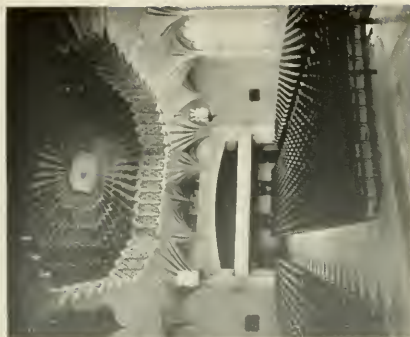
M A S M I D

PUBLISHED ANNUALLY BY THE YESHIVA COLLEGE STUDENT ORGANIZATION

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~ EDITORIALS ~

THE LAST OF THE PIONEERS

1935 witnesses the fourth graduating class at Yeshiva College; the last of its pioneers have come and gone. As they leave, they bear with them the memory of their freshman days when Yeshiva had not yet emerged from its experimental stage, when an air of hesitant uncertainty, though permeated by a spirit of optimism, pervaded its halls. This year's graduates have actively participated in the transition from the probative period of the school to its establishment on a sound and secure basis.

The college has now achieved a position where criticism, rather than weakening its stability and endangering its future existence, actually contributes in no little degree to its improvement and continued expansion. A student organization, pulsating with life, is the most sensitive barometer of the success or failure of any institution of learning. The authorities of Yeshiva College need not view the development of a forceful, assertive student body with apprehension. The active interest displayed by the students at Yeshiva should indicate to the administration that they have been successful in instilling in their students an appreciation of, and love for, the college, and a deep concern for the furtherance of Jewish life and education in America. The burden of interpreting and transmitting traditional Jewish culture in the midst of modern civilization need no longer rest on the shoulders of a few. The students of Yeshiva College have unequivocally expressed their eagerness to assume a considerable share of this responsibility.

THE COMMENTATOR-- BLAZING A NEW TRAIL

With this issue of the annual Masmid, we gladly cede to the Commentator our position as the organ and medium of student expression in Yeshiva College. A bi-weekly newspaper, we feel, constantly in touch with the pulse of student opinion and sentiment and alive to the problems of the day, is a more effective means of gauging undergraduate feeling than an annual designed to perpetuate scholarship and to record the history of collegiate activities.

The Commentator has entered upon a commendable course. In its vigorous and forceful approach to questions of vital importance to the student body, questions of Jewish, national, and international significance, as well as problems of an institutional nature, it has announced its intention of attacking all problems open-mindedly, critically, frankly, and constructively. It has focused the attention of both students and authorities on matters fundamental to the continued success of the institution and the strengthening of its position as the center of Orthodox Judaism in America. Moreover the Commentator has served and, we hope, will continue to serve as a guide to the administration in the development of academic policies.

A warning must be sounded, however, against any attempt at the suppression or censorship of student expression. Far from solving controversial issues, such action can only lead to bitter resentment and a distorted relationship between

the students and their college. Only an open and sincere discussion of various problems will make for a more harmonious accord within the institution. The Commentator has blazed the trail. Let us hope that it will serve as a constant leader in this direction.



THE TRIBUTE OF ALBERT EINSTEIN

The acceptance by Professor Albert Einstein of the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, bestowed on him last October at Yeshiva College, is an indication of the increasingly prominent position occupied by the institution in the academic world. This event assumes a greater significance when it is realized that, previous to accepting the Yeshiva degree, Professor Einstein had refused similar honors from many of the largest and oldest universities in the United States.

Professor Einstein evidenced by his action his recognition of Yeshiva College not merely as a center of religious learning but as an institution dedicated to the advancement of scholarship in all phases of culture. That Yeshiva College has come to symbolize for men like Einstein the eternal genius of the Jewish people, was most clearly shown by him in replying to the honor conferred upon him that "not external success but a deep spiritual perception of life has been considered by it (Yeshiva College) as the most desirable attainment."

When men of such note as the world's outstanding physicist pay such glowing tribute to Yeshiva College, the progress of the institution since its inception but seven years ago becomes little short of phenomenal. It is a tribute to the college, to its administration and faculty, to its students, and to its ideals.

THE WORLD ZIONIST CONGRESS

The convocation this summer of the 19th World Zionist Congress places the problem of Zionism in stark relief before the Jewish people. The Zionist Organization has reached a crisis in its existence. The 18th Congress, held two years ago, witnessed the degeneracy of the World Zionist Movement as the meeting place for all shades of Zionist opinion. It has become in the last two years the organ for the expression of but one among all the nationalistic views. The recent bolt of the Revisionists from the organization and the coolness of the Mizrahi toward the Congress indicate the disintegration of organized Zionism. These developments have been occasioned by the seizure of power on the part of one party and the negation of other groups as factors in the determination of Zionist policies.

The coming World Zionist Congress, therefore, has as its major problem the reconciliation of all groups in the work of rebuilding Eretz Yisroel, and the restoration of the World Zionist Movement to its former position as the voice of Zionism in its broader sense rather than in any of its limited connotations. Unless it accomplishes this task it is definitely doomed to oblivion. In the early years of its existence the Zionist movement had many vital functions. It had to arouse an interest in the settlement and development of Palestine, to provide for educational facilities, health questions, and the general establishment of social and economic security. At present most of these phases are taken care of by the Palestinian population. All that is left for World Zionism is the consolidation of all Jewry. Failure in this issue will reduce the Congress to an insignificant body in the eyes of the nations of the world. Judaism cannot afford to let this happen. The 19th World Zionist Congress must rise above personalities and parties and must present a united front to Jewry and to the world at large.

Maimonides and the Present Generation

by DR. BERNARD REVEL

The last words of the Pentateuch—"And in respect to all that mighty hand, and in the great, terrific deeds which Moses displayed before the eyes of all Israel"—are applicable, in a figurative sense, to Maimonides, to his Code and to his great Guide. Also applicable to him are the preceding words—"which the Lord had sent him to do in the land of Egypt." How mysterious are the ways of Providence and of Israel's millennial history! Egypt, the land where Israel became a nation and the people of the Book given by God to Moses, born and reared in Egypt, was also the land where the "second Moses" revealed himself and gave his people the Mishna Torah, the clearest and fullest exposition of the Torah in its totality.

Maimonides was the diadem in the crown of the golden age of Jewish creativeness, the era in our history that bequeathed us some of our greatest permanent national treasures,—some of the things we cherish most in our national culture,—the period that has left a most indelible impress upon the course of our history.

His interpretation of Israel's basic beliefs has become part of our liturgy; his halakic works are still the subject of daily study in the Torah-academies throughout the world. Called by his contemporaries "the light of our eyes," he continues to be the "Light of Israel," not only by virtue of what he has achieved, but by virtue of what he was, by his heroic moral and intellectual stature, symbol of intellectual height and spiritual serenity. The radiance of his personality shone upon all alike and its blessings have reached all succeeding ages.

As with all men who have helped to make history, pathfinders who have been in many respects centuries ahead of their time, many were his critics and detractors. Many of his views on method and substance have been centers of fierce and

protracted controversy ever since his day. Among his opponents—and there can be no doubt of the honesty and lofty motives of most of them—there were many worthy of him. But, friend or adversary, no one during the last thirty generations could afford to ignore, to be indifferent to, this sovereign of the spirit and monarch of the mind.

In the centuries—old symphony of admiration, reverence and glowing tribute, there were—and there still are—discords of denunciation of the technique and finality of the Mishna Torah, of the codification of theological and doctrinal views at its beginning, and of the views themselves. Maimonides is still unjustly accused of having aimed to make his Code the final authority on all matters of law and creed, and thus of tending to stifle further free discussion and arrest continued development, making the study of the Talmud unessential.

As a true disciple of Hillel, Maimonides loved peace and bore denunciation and even vilification with dignity, holding no resentment against his detractors. He seldom defended himself, but fought for the truth of his views. Humility, the very essence of true greatness, was to him the crown of all virtue and he laid no claim to infallibility. To quote his own words: "I never pride myself on not making mistakes; on the contrary, when I discovered one, or if I am convinced of my error by others, I am ready to change anything in my writings, in my ways and even in my nature."

But much higher than his epoch-making works, towers Maimonides, the man. He has become to succeeding generations the symbol of pure motive, of selfless quest of truth, of noble tolerance and intellectual honesty. To the House of Israel, he has ever been the symbol of the complete and perfect Jewish personality, of the harmonious union

of scientist and saint, of the consummate rationalist and the Torah-intoxicated man, of the cold logician and the warm pietist. He was the rare combination of profound insight, crystal-like clearness and charm of expression. Stoic poise, incisive thinking and indomitable energy; humility and full recognition of the worth of his ideas and ideals; broad and deep humanity and boundless and self-sacrificing love for his people; high idealism and profound common sense and practicality, were fused in this complete man.

He arrived upon the arena of history in a period of great crisis in the life of his people. He placed all his gifts of heart and mind upon the altar of God, Israel and humanity. Complete master of the culture of the two worlds, the Jewish and the Arabic, each then in its golden age, and of all accumulated knowledge of the Torah, in all its fulness and depth, master of self-mastery and systematic genius, he became the architect who built for the ages, brought order and, like Moses, made a path in the stormy sea of the Talmud. He bridged—though but for a time—the chasm between Judaism and the best thought of the day. Rightly called “the purest monotheist,” he ascended to the heaven of spirituality by the ladder of faith, supported by reason, purified by spiritual insight.

The works of Maimonides became “new heavens,”—studded with guiding stars of deep enlightened faith and morality, of love of truth and humanity, of deep faith in the ultimate destiny of man, and of a loyalty to Israel, of which there was never greater exemplar.

He understood human nature at its highest and lowest, and did not close his eyes to human frailties. All-absorbing study of the Torah, contemplation of the infinite and metaphysical thought were to him the supreme goal of existence, the royal road to immortality and eternal bliss. Nevertheless, cognizant of the various gradations of the human intellect and character and aware of the fact that the gift of contemplation of, and communion with, the Infinite is given to but a

few chosen souls, he counseled the average man, particularly in his later work, against the quest of God by way of reason, against delving into the mysteries of “what precedes and what follows, what is above and what below,” but rather to follow the proven road of “the righteous, in his faith, shall live.” He did not aim to disturb sturdy faith with foreign doctrines. He taught that the Torah and its precepts, and the concepts rooted in the soul of Universal Israel are the cornerstone of sound fruitful Jewish life.

The heroic stature of Maimonides and his people and his people's boundless love for him have not caused his personality to be lost in a cloud of legend or hero-worship, as is the case with many of the elite of the spirit in Israel. His lovable personality stands out against the canvas of time. Maimonides is more often misunderstood by his admirers than by his opponents. Maimonides did not proclaim the exclusive sovereignty of reason as some of his admirers of even this generation would have us think. No mere master or servant of reason, of metaphysical speculation, could become the lasting object of deep love and affection of a whole people, particularly a people of spiritual bent as Israel.

Maimonides sought to prove—as was vital in the exigency of his time—that the scientific and philosophic teachings of his day were in harmony with what was to him—as to all Israel of his day—the only fountain of eternal truth and life—the Torah. He aimed to prove that the Torah is a Torah of Truth, which will forever stand the test of reason. The Torah was his first and last love, notwithstanding the platonic love he confessed for Aristotle. While he raised religious speculation to a high plane, thereby widening the horizon of Jewish thought, making it more articulate, the teachings and commands of the Torah were his chief concern. In his mind faith and philosophy met in amity from the different starting points, attaining the single goal—the love of God.

The age of Maimonides was an age—not much

unlike our own—of Jewish persecution, of denunciation and vilification of Judaism and Israel, of brutal barbarism in the ruthless persecution of Judaism, which led to despair and spiritual stagnation within Israel. The ancient centers of Jewish life and learning, Palestine and Babylonia, were, as he graphically describes them, hovering between life and death; the old seats of learning, outside of Provence, were but reminders of a spiritual grandeur that was no more. Maimonides blessed by heredity,—scion of an illustrious family claiming descent from the House of David,—favored by environment, intellect and training, saw, like Moses, the suffering of his people and their broken spirit. He considered his superior endowments as a grave responsibility. He set out to dedicate his vast erudition, deep insight and outstanding position to the service of his people, to help save the ship of Israel then tossing in the stormy sea of the religious fanaticism of the Cross and the Crescent, to help strengthen the faith of his people in God, in themselves, in their higher destiny, in the ultimate triumph of Israel and the Torah. He consecrated his life to strengthening their will to live, to teaching them to understand the Torah and to suffer and sacrifice for it, to bringing solace and peace to their bleeding hearts, and to protecting them against religious aberrations, particularly the then powerful Karaite schism, and the alluring, but dangerous, hopes of false Messiahs. Every phase of his life and activity tended to comfort his people, inspire them, teach them the truth of faith purified by reason and the fundamental verity that the rest and value of spiritual knowledge lies in following it, in living it.

These aims Maimonides sought to achieve mainly through his halakic works and his Epistles of counsel and comfort to the near and far Jewish communities. Most of his literary efforts—as all his life—he devoted to the needs of the people at large, and only the Guide he wrote for the chosen few.

Of the Guide, his philosophic Magnum Opus,

the first systematic presentation of Jewish belief and Jewish hope, suffice it to say, in the words of Dr. Wolfson, that "it is the most excellent depository of medieval philosophic lore, where one finds the most concise analysis of philosophic problems, the most complete summaries of philosophic opinions, the clearest definitions of terms expressed in clear quotable phrases," that the works and views of Maimonides determined the philosophic training of Spinoza and helped guide him in the formation of his own philosophy. Nor is it necessary to dwell upon the influence of Maimonides on Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas, the greatest of Latin Scholastics, and on the lesser lights of the scholastic period, who represent the union of Aristotelianism and Christian dogma.

Maimonides placed reason above all other human qualities and considered its exercise the acme of human attainment and the source of eternal life. But he also taught that moral perfection must precede intellectual perfection, and that the life of reason can flourish only in an orderly society. True wisdom is founded upon moral perfection; they must ever go hand in hand. Moral perfection can be attained only through the study of the Torah and the faithful observance of its precepts. For, according to Maimonides, the Law is not imposed upon man arbitrarily as something which is foreign to his nature, as the imposed will of God, but is based upon reason; and all its commands have a threefold purpose. "It aims first at the establishment of good mutual relations among men by removing injustice and by the acquisition of moral virtues, so that the orderly life of the people of a country may continue uninterruptedly and every individual may acquire his first perfection, his physical and social well-being; secondly, it aims to train us in correct beliefs and to impart to us true opinions whereby we may attain the highest perfection." Maimonides makes the moral virtues, to be acquired by following the dictates of the Torah, a condition prerequisite to the blessing of the im-

mortal soul and its happiness and delight in the knowledge and love of God. The fulfillment of the Biblical commandments inculcate fear of God, whereas true knowledge of His nature, as far as it is attainable, leads to love of God. For, as Maimonides says, "One cannot love God except through the knowledge with which one knows Him; and love is in proportion with such knowledge. Thus love must by its very nature occupy man's entire mind, so that no room is left for any other desire." "It is well known," says Maimonides elsewhere, "and quite evident that the love of God cannot strike deep root in the heart of man unless it occupies his mind constantly so that nothing in the world really matters to him except the love of God." "The general object of the Law is twofold; the well-being of the body and the well-being of the soul. The first consists in being healthy and in the best possible physical condition. The second perfection of man consists in his becoming an actually intelligent being; knowing about things in existence all that a person most perfectly developed may know. It is evident that this second perfection does not include any actions and moral virtues, but only intellectual conceptions, which are arrived at by speculation, and are the result of reasoning. It is also evident that the second and superior kind of perfection can only be attained when the first perfection had been acquired." To help man attain this first perfection Maimonides dedicated his great halakic trilogy.

In his early manhood he composed his Commentary on the Mishna. The Mishna, the basic and authoritative code of the Oral Law, edited by Judah Hanasi, with whom Maimonides claimed relationship, with whom indeed he felt a spiritual kinship, became after a millennium a work almost unintelligible by itself and inaccessible to the average student because of the maze of the talmudic and post-talmudic literature, which in time had been grouped around it. Maimonides, through his Commentary written in Arabic,—then the language of the people—endeavored to restore

the Mishna to its historic place as the fountain head of the Halakah. What his Code is to the discursive literature, his Commentary is to the Mishna. Every division of the Mishna is preceded, in his Commentary, by a comprehensive, and often exhaustive, introduction, revealing the underlying principles of the Mishnaic laws. The text and context of every Mishna are properly analyzed and interpreted, and where several opinions are offered, the final decision is made clear. The moral, theological, and scientific references are made subject to lengthy discussions, displaying the impact of Maimonides' incisive and systematic mind. The Commentary is still invaluable to the student as a scientific introduction to the study of Jewish belief and Law. This first résumé by Maimonides of the Oral Law, while revealing him as the undisputed master of his subject and his method, is not so all-inclusive as the source-material used by him in the Code. This is particularly true of his use of the Palestinian Talmud. Some of the views expressed in the Commentary, particularly in matters of religious speculation, are somewhat modified in his later works, and we are thus granted a glimpse of the unfolding of his creative mind and vigorous spirit.

The Book of Precepts, the second in the halakic trilogy, serves as an introduction to his monumental work, the Code. It enumerates and classifies the laws of the Torah, which, according to an old tradition considered by Maimonides to be authentic, number 613, in accordance with new and precise criteria and principles. The revelation of the Torah to Moses on Sinai is to Maimonides one of the cardinal principles of Judaism, upon which rests the authenticity of the Torah; this serves as the basis of his conception of the Torah. The supremacy and uniqueness of the prophecy of Moses is the key to many views of Maimonides. In the 14 Principles in his Book of Precepts he established criteria to distinguish between the Scriptural laws given to Moses on Sinai, laws that are immutable and eternal, to be numbered among the 613 Precepts, and the tem-

porary laws, general exhortations, details of, and reason for, the basic laws mentioned. "Divre Sopherim," as well as the rabbinic laws, though of equal normative value, are not to be counted among the 613 Precepts. The Revelation on Sinai was the most exalted event in human history, and the laws then given to Moses must be set apart and distinguished from all other binding laws. Upon this concept depend several legal views peculiar to Maimonides. It is probable that in the establishment of the criteria concerning the 613 Precepts Maimonides was influenced by the views of Abraham Ibn Ezra in his *Yesod More*.

Maimonides states somewhere that the Code, *Mishna Torah*, was originally planned by him as a reference work for his own use, as a path in the labyrinth of talmudic and rabbinic literature for practical purposes. A study of the Code, the highest expression of the systematic genius of post-Talmudic literature, convinces one that, consciously or subconsciously, Maimonides planned the *Mishna Torah* to be the authoritative code of life for all Israel, including the laws that are not applicable to Jewish life in the Diaspora, like the laws of the Sanctuary and Levitical purity.

It is evident from the Epistle of Maimonides to the Jewish Community in Yemen that he considered the misery and anguish of Israel under the Cross and under the Crescent as the agony of the days preceding the Advent of the Messiah. He felt keenly the universal distress of his people and believed that the advent of the Redeemer was imminent. For, according to Maimonides, the redemption depends mainly upon Israel's repentance and return to God. He exhorted the people against indulging in computations and predictions, from possible indications in the Scriptures, of the time of the redemption, but he hoped that the day might be near when Israel and its great affirmation of faith—its social morality—would come into their own, when the world would be blessed with peace and plenty, and would follow the sublime religious and social teachings of the Torah. The binding power of the Torah to be

authoritative even in the days of the Messiah, he composed the first, systematic presentation of the entire body of the Jewish belief and law, based upon the entire traditional literature of Israel of all ages to be adequate not only for his generation and the generations to come in the Diaspora, but even for the Messianic days. The Code contains all the Halakah, the well-spring of Jewish reason, and all that is essential in the Agadah, the source and the depository of Jewish vision and emotion. The Halakah and the Agadah of Millennia, from Moses to Alfasi, Maimonides sifted, selected, arranged, recapitulated, illuminated and established as the norm of Jewish belief and law.

In the Code, rabbinic learning celebrates its greatest triumph. The significance and influence of this epoch-making creation of Jewish lore, fashioned by Israel's supreme systematic and synthetic mind in the middle ages, can hardly be comprehended by those who are not thoroughly familiar with Jewish law and lore. The Code gave new impetus to the study and elucidation of many phases of traditional law which had been neglected since the day of the Amoraim. The scope of the encyclopedic knowledge, of the sources drawn upon in the construction of the Code, is even now not fully appreciated. It is likely to remain a permanent source of study for the serious student of the Halakah, second only to the Talmud itself. The greatest work in the codification of any system of law is thus the product of a son of the people who placed content and depth above form and method of presentation.

Maimonides seldom introduces a personal opinion in the Code. But the interpretation of individual "Sug'yoth" of the Talmud, as often gleaned from his decisions, constitutes a commentary on both Talmuds, and sheds light also on their correct text, for Maimonides was a painstaking student of the text, searching and verifying old manuscripts, as he penetrated and absorbed their spirit.

As we view Maimonides from the perspective of three-quarters of a millennium, we behold him

a High Priest, faithful guardian and custodian of the Torah in its fulness and purity; as a disciple of the prophets, exalted exponent of Israel's fundamental affirmation of the absolute unity of God (from which follows the essential unity of man), of divine optimism and inherent good that underlies life and man, of the ethical vision of his people, and as the wise man and practical philosopher, the healer of the body as well as the soul, teaching physical and mental hygiene, the ways of life and illuminating the practical wisdom of his people. His niche in the sanctuary of humanity is just beginning to be revealed in the perspective of time, for he truly was an exalted personality.

Today, as in the days of Maimonides 800 years ago, Israel is beset by vilifying, unrelenting enemies from without; and spiritual aridity, deadening indifference to, and arrogant ignorance of, its millennial heritage threaten its existence from within. The chasm between the truths of the Torah and the spirit of science seems to be widening. Close contact with modern life and thought make it imperative to reformulate Israel's views on life and human destiny, on the vital problems of existence. We stand in need of a Maimonides to encourage and guide the preplexed and faint-hearted among us, who are losing the way, to heal the spiritual wounds of our people, and once again harmoniously to unite reason and life-giving faith. A man is needed that can call a halt to false prophets, who, claiming to seek "the advancement of Judaism," attempt to transfer the center of gravity of Jewish life from the Torah to a new paganism of folk-lore and folk-ways, substituting for the God of Israel a faith built out of folk psychology—a venture which every page of our millennial history warns us must end in disaster.

As in the days of Maimonides, Israel is ever ready to meet the challenge of the times, though it does not embrace as the final truth every scientific hypothesis, some of which are often inimical to its own fundamental affirmations. Theories

come and go. They are beginning to come nearer to the fundamental affirmations of the Torah, "and the word of our God shall remain forever."

Perhaps never before has humanity been in greater need of a constructive philosophy, of a spiritual interpretation of life and human history. Toward this mankind is groping, impelled by the instinct of self-preservation. Thoughtful men are beginning to recognize that we are in the midst of the twilight of material domination of thought and of dogmatism in science, that marked and marred the passing era. Advancing scientific thought is freeing itself from the tyranny of a mechanistic interpretation of existence. We stand at a turning point in man's understanding of the universe and of himself. There is a growing awareness of a purposeful world and of man as a rational, responsible agent of the world, as Maimonides conceived them. The more profound the insight of the scientist and scholar into the phenomena of nature, the more intensive and refined his scientific experience and intuition, the less conflicting seem such knowledge and faith. The might, mystery and majesty of the unmeasured cosmos, constantly unfolding before us, of the myriads of spheres, of life and of the life of the spirit, cause the true scientist to exclaim with the Psalmist in wonderment and awe: "When I behold Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast established—what is the mortal, that Thou rememberest him? and the son of man, that Thou thinkest of him? Yet thou hast made him but a little less than angels."

The growing recognition of the validity of genuine spiritual experience and the reawakening spiritual insight and longing are destined to give new directions to man's quest of ultimate reality and unity. No wonder that mankind, notwithstanding the resurging eternal hatred of the eternal people, is in its search for spiritual truth, coming again and increasingly to rely upon the fundamental concepts and thoughts of Jewish

(Continued on page 28)

The Importance of the Hasmonean Kingdom

by DAVID W. PETERGORSKY

Since the dawn of its history, Judaism has been subject to the attacks of foreign cultures that have thrown themselves relentlessly at it. Always, alien tendencies have attempted to make considerable inroads into the heart of Jewish doctrine, to mold the contours of Jewish life and to color its modes of expression. Particularly during their early history, when the waves of Asiatic, Greek and Roman life surged mercilessly over Palestine, were the Jews forced to battle with every resource at their command to retain their distinctiveness as a religious, as well as a national, entity. That these onslaughts from without have induced determined reaction from within is the secret of Judaism's survival. Each invasion of foreign culture was met with active resistance on the part of the nation. These inner developments that followed every foreign sortie determined to a very considerable degree the specific aspects of Judaism, for they arose as expressions of the Jewish mind itself.

Such a period in Jewish life that marked not only the encroachment of alien influences but the corresponding reaction within the Jewish people was that of the Hasmoneans. Few subsequent eras in Jewish history were to witness such important developments in Jewish life and in the Jewish religion as did the age of the Maccabeans and the Hasmoneans. It is to a consideration of the importance of the Hasmonean kingdom in Jewish life that we shall direct our attention. Before doing so, however, we feel that a brief survey of the historical background of their epoch is essential for a proper appreciation of our problem.

The history of the period from the revolt of the Maccabeans to the establishment of Roman suzerainty over Palestine falls naturally into three stages—the Maccabean revolt and the battle for

religious freedom, the struggle for political autonomy, and the attempt of the nation, rent by internal strife, to maintain its newly-acquired status of independence. We shall consider each of these phases briefly.

The seeds of the Maccabean revolt were sowed in Judaea by the Hellenist party. Like rats gnawing at a ship's timbers, they were slowly undermining the fabric of Judaism by the introduction into Jerusalem of various aspects of Greek culture. This gradual Hellenization, however, evoked no violent resistance until the Hellenist party enlisted the aid of Antiochus Epiphanes in their de-Judaizing campaign. The latter, forced by Rome to leave Egypt while invading that country, readily vented his anger on the Jews. The appeal to him of the High Priest Menelaus, to strip the Jews of their distinctive religion and to superimpose forcibly on them the culture of the Hellenes struck in Antiochus a responsive chord. By decree, he sought to destroy with one stroke centuries of Jewish tradition. The climax of Antiochus' ruthless drive came with the desecration of the Temple and the placing of the statue of Jupiter on the Holy Altar (17 Tammuz, 168 B.C.E.). This attempt to deprive the Jews of their religious liberty fanned into flame the smoldering embers of their antagonism to Hellenism. Inspired by the courageous example of Mattathias and his sons they broke into open rebellion. Judas Maccabeus who succeeded to the leadership of the insurgents on his father's death in 167 proved himself a wonderful general. His successive victories over the Syrians resulted in the rededication of the Temple in 165. From that date till the rise of the House of Antipater in 163 B.C.E., a descendent of Mattathias led the Jews, whether as captain of a band of guerilla warriors, as High Priest of the Jewish people or as ethnarch or king of the nation. Any

consideration of the importance of this period on the development of Jewish history must therefore properly begin not with the granting of political independence to Palestine by Demetrius II in 143 or with the popular appointment of Simon as High Priest, general and ethnarch in 141 but with the revolt of Mattathias and his sons at Modein in 168.

The first phase of the period ended in 165 with the reconsecration of the Temple. The recognition by Lysias of the right of the people to religious freedom gained for the Jews what the Maccabees had sought to achieve—the right to worship their own God, on their own soil, in their own manner. Till 165 the struggle had been waged for religious freedom. After its achievement, the end sought was political independence. Nothing less than political autonomy could suffice to safeguard the national mode of life; and the realization of this led Jonathan to center his efforts on this goal. During his rule (152-144 B.C.E.) he united the quarreling factions in Judaea and made of the country a strong, self-reliant nation. In 152 Alexander Balas, pretender to the throne of Syria, made him High Priest. Concomitant with the growth of the nation's power was Jonathan's rapid advance in prestige and influence. And when he met his death at the hands of the treacherous Trypho, it was but a short step from the position he had occupied to the High Priesthood of an independent nation—the role that his successor Simon was soon to assume.

Simon consolidated the gains made by Jonathan and raised Judaea to the rank of an independent nation. The granting of practical independence to the Jews in Palestine by Demetrius II in 143-142 B.C.E., and Simon's election in 141 as High Priest, general and ethnarch of the expanding nation are landmarks in the struggle of the Jews against the forces seeking their annihilation. With Simon's elevation to the status of an independent ruler, the second stage of this period, the fight for political independence, comes to an end; the Hasmonean dynasty begins with this event. Judaea

was now possessed of full religious and practically complete political liberty.

The third stage of the Hasmonean rule is the story of the rising nation striving to preserve its hard-earned gains from the encroachment of foreign powers, the efforts of the various leaders to achieve territorial expansion and the conflict within the state of the divergent factions. The history of the latter phase, from the point of view of the later development of Jewish life, the most important factor of the Hasmonean era, bulks large in the general history of the period. The struggle for supremacy between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the alternation of both factions in the seat of power and the final triumph of the Pharisees is the story of the rise and fall of the Jewish state from the ascension of John Hyrcanus to the Roman conquest. The dissension between the two parties split the nation and ultimately resulted in the Civil War that once more established foreign rule in Palestine and raised the eagle of Rome on the soil of the Holy Land.

Such, very briefly, is the history of the Jews in Palestine from the revolt of Mattathias to the pillaging of Jerusalem by the Romans under Pompey—a period that was to exercise a profound influence on the molding of the Jewish religion and on Jewish life. It is to the appreciation of the importance of this era in Jewish history that we shall now direct our attention.

Many transitory benefits accrued to the Jews during the Hasmonean reign. Most significant of these was the territorial expansion of the country. The nation burst the bonds that had limited it to the narrow confines of Judaea and spread over all Palestine until its size was almost equal to that of the Kingdom of David and Solomon. During the rule of Simon and John Hyrcanus, a state of commercial prosperity existed in the land. The seaports, in particular, thrived on a flourishing commercial trade. But these gains were destined to be temporary ones and with the Roman conquest, went for nought. The sig-

nificance of the era lies solely in its permanent and enduring accomplishments.

No achievement of the Hasmoneans was destined to have a greater effect on Judaism in particular and on world thought in general than their destruction of Hellenism as a serious factor in Jewish life. After the conquests of Alexander the Great, the Hellenistic civilization had spread throughout the entire Near East. In the wake of its triumphant march it left the shattered debris of older cultures and erected on their ruins the structure of Greek life. Its influence permeated Palestine and made itself felt even in Jerusalem. Gradually many aspects of Hellenism crept into the Jewish life. The use of the Greek language and the adoption in daily life of Greek customs continued apace. Gymnasia and Greek games had been introduced into Jerusalem; races and wrestling contests became for the younger element the order of the day. Among the wealthy Jews, Hellenism expressed itself in the apostasy of many and in the neglect of traditional practices on the part of others. With the growing influence of Hellenism its champions waxed bolder. A conflict between those who espoused the external splendor of the Greek life and those who insisted on a rigid and uncompromising Judaism was inevitable, for Hellenism and Judaism were two incompatible forces seeking the allegiance of the Jews. Hellenism fostered appreciation of beauty and love of art. It taught penetration into the natural causes of the Universe and its phenomena. Its morals were based on a purely rational foundation. Making investigation its focal point, it bequeathed to the world philosophy, the sciences, and love for beauty. Judaism was founded on love of mankind and righteousness, making mercy its underlying principle. Not love of the beautiful as preached by Hellenism but love of the good and the noble featured its doctrine. Hellenism made its appeal to the mind through the eye and ear. The decided superiority of Greek art coated Greek life with a film of splendor that stood in marked contrast to the sobriety of the Jewish mode of life.

The exploitation of the physical instincts practised by the Greeks with the resultant freedom over one's body was incompatible with the Jewish preoccupation with matters of the spirit. Hellenism emphasized freedom of thought and belittled authority. Judaism insisted on implicit faith in the word of God and obedience to His commands. Rationalism and revelation could not have harmonized. Their conflict was to determine which would establish itself as the prevailing mode of Jewish life. The revolt of the Maccabees represents the final stage of that conflict and most determined attempt to stem the on-rushing tide of Greek influence. The victories of the Maccabees supplied the Jews with the strength to combat the inroads of Hellenism and finally to expel it from their land. The importance of this ejection of Hellenistic influence cannot be overemphasized. Judaism has made contributions to world civilization in the field of ethics and morality that place it in the very forefront of the creators of culture. Through the Jews, the ideal of ethical monotheism was carried over the entire world. Its influence has been a universal one. The Jewish people, too, have survived centuries of bitter persecution and determined efforts at their complete destruction because Judaism acted as a bond cementing them into a unity. The Torah served as a rallying point around which Jews gathered and gave up their lives to prevent its defilement. Had Hellenism conquered Palestine as it did the rest of the Near East, the Jews would have remained but a small, impoverished, religious community, a sect that could never have exercised any universal influence; or they would have succumbed completely to its onslaught and have lost their identity. The Hasmoneans, by ejecting Hellenism from Palestine thus made it possible for Judaism as a religion to be a light to the world on the one hand, and for the Jews as a nation to survive on the other. In the natural interplay of cultures that come into contact with each other, Hellenism may have left some impress on Jewish life. These influences,

however, merely affected the external manifestations of Hebrew civilization. The essence of Judaism was to remain strictly and purely Jewish.

If the expulsion of Hellenistic influence from Palestine served to determine in part the nature of Judaism by preventing encroachment from without, profound developments within the nation itself were to play an equally important role in shaping the future character of Jewish life. Fostered by the turmoil and instability of the period many divergent factions made their appearance. Whether the accentuation of existing tendencies or the development of new thought, fundamentally different philosophies of Jewish life were brought into violent conflict with each other. And when the smoke of battle had cleared and Pharisaism had emerged the victor, the foundation was laid for the imposing and durable structure that Judaism was to rear. The Pharisees and the Sadducees were the most important of these parties. While limitations of space prevent a discussion of the fundamental assumptions of both sects, of the development of the Pharisaic tendency from Ezra to the Hasmoneans or of the growth of the Sadducees, several factors must be noted.

Ezra on his return from Babylon sought to make "the religion which in former times had been mainly the collective expression of the nation's devotion to God, the personal concern of each individual." Successive generations of Sopherim worked out into fuller detail the implicit contents of the Torah as changing circumstances called for further interpretation of the original precepts. The impact of Hellenism weakened the hold of the people on Judaism; the revolt of the Maccabees strengthened their devotion to the religion of Torah. The Law became once more the core of Jewish life. With the increasing importance of the Jewish nation as a political entity, religion was mixed with politics to an extent which displeased no small number of the people. "There was therefore again a movement towards a stricter interpretation of the Torah and a more thorough-

going obedience to its requirements on the part of a minority on the one side, to correspond with the movement towards 'worldliness' on the other side . . . Those who formed the governing class, the great families and the chief priests, were the Sadducees. Those who maintained the full strictness of the religion of the Torah were the Pharisees." The Pharisees accepted the Oral Tradition as implicitly as they did the Written Word and kept the religion of the Torah as a living principle, capable of being adapted to the fresh developments of religious life; the Sadducees held to the letter of the original scripture and refused innovation. The later years of the Hasmonean rule witnessed the decline in power of the Sadducees and with the War of 70 A.D. they passed completely from Jewish life. The importance of the Pharisees' triumph cannot be overemphasized for the Rabbinic tradition which is so fully expressed in the Mishna and in the Talmud and which through the medium of these monumental works became the foundation on which Jewish life has since rested is the embodiment of Pharisaism. Judaism as a religion has survived the vicissitudes of history because it has been able to adapt its fundamental principles to varying conditions and to changing circumstances. Any movement such as that of the Sadducees that would have clung stubbornly to the letter of the Written Law, that refused to accept the Oral Tradition and the interpretation of the Rabbis, and to which innovations were tabu, would have sounded the death knell of the Jewish religion and, with it, that of the Jewish people.

The attempt to deprive the Jews of their own religious life had resulted, as we have seen, in a new enthusiasm for the Law and in a more zealous application of its principles to every-day life. Similarly, the endeavor to destroy the sources from which they drew their inspiration, the Holy Writings, had the effect of rendering these treasures even more precious than they had hitherto been. The writings of the Prophets assumed a new importance in the eyes of the people.

To the Jews, the predictions of the Prophets as to Israel's punishment seemed to have been fulfilled in the persecutions of Antiochus. Their expatiations as to the desirability of obedience to the Law and exhortations as to the results of disobedience to it were in accord with the new position occupied by the Law in Jewish life. A more intense and active preoccupation with the traditional sacred literature became evident. The desire to collect and to edit the Holy Writings marked the beginning of the choice between the religious books which afterwards was to result in the fixing of the third group of books in the Bible, "The Sacred Writings." We are indebted to the literary activity of this period for the present form of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Twelve Minor Prophets, and possibly the Psalms, as well as for the writing of Daniel and of several books of the Apocrypha.

The reaction against Hellenism expressed itself in a strengthening of characteristically Jewish modes and customs. The interest in editing the Scriptures led to an increased popular use of and important developments in the Hebrew language. The close contact of the people with the Asiatic nations had witnessed the supersession of the Hebrew by the Aramaic. The more intense preoccupation with the Biblical works effected a renaissance in the Holy language. It underwent a rejuvenation and became for a second time, albeit in an altered form, the popular language of the people.

The attempt to crush the Jews as a national group had ended in failure. The projected death-blow to their religion met with even less success. The Jews were thus inspired with renewed confidence in God and faith in their destiny. Their successful opposition to the vastly superior forces of Syria was ample proof to them that Divine Providence had intervened to save them from extinction. Their message, the Jews were convinced, was one of truth; they were destined to preach it to humanity.

This period, with its alternation of persecution

and freedom, of defeat and victory, also witnessed a very important development in the Messianic ideal. During the dark days of the persecution, the Jews sought solace in their visions of the Messianic era when Israel would preach God's message to mankind. The assumption by Simon and Aristobulus II of complete civil power lent fuel to their Messianic hopes. A King was seated on the Throne of David. True, he was not of David's lineage; nevertheless, the people rejoiced in his presence on the throne and eagerly anticipated the day when the Messiah, a true descendant of David, would rule in Israel. Those of the Psalms written during this period give expression to these eschatological hopes. Henceforth, the vision of the Messianic Redemption was always to be for the Jews a ray of light and comfort shining through the dark clouds of oppression.

The Hasmonean period awakened, as well, a new spirit of national consciousness. The triumph of the Maccabees and the Hasmoneans over the powerful armies of Syria and the people's first taste of real independence sent the life blood of national sentiment coursing through their veins. The little country which for years had been the football of the great powers in their international play began to feel a sense of its own importance. The first development of a national sentiment that kindled in the Jewish people a desire for national prestige and political autonomy can thus be traced to the Hasmonean era.

It is evident that the developments of this period are for Judaism of profound importance. Jewish life and Jewish religion owe much to the Hasmonean era. The expulsion of the Hellenistic influence permitted Judaism to remain a pure and unique entity. The Jews were enabled to retain their distinctive religious life and to preach to the world the message of Judaism. The strengthening of their faith tightened the bonds that united the people and proved to be a vital factor in the national survival of the Jewish people. The new zeal for the Law made religion the concern of every individual and achieved a more thorough-

going application of its principles in daily life. The triumph of Pharisaism paved the way for the development of the Rabbinic tradition as the very basis of Judaism. The acceptance of the Oral Law and of innovation made of Judaism a living and vibrant religion, one that was developed to meet the exigencies presented by varying environments, rather than remaining a static entity conflicting with its surroundings. The enthusiasm for the Law manifested itself in increased activity and interest in editing and collecting the Holy Writings. The Prophetic Works became of prime importance in Jewish teaching and the ideals of these great leaders rendered Jewish life richer and more meaningful. The threat to the Hebrew

language of extinction at the hands of the Aramaic was repulsed by the feverish preoccupation with the Sacred Writings. It became as of old the tongue of the people. The crystallization and strengthening of the Messianic ideal that later became one of the basic tenets of the Jewish faith can be traced directly to the period under consideration. And finally, the awakening of the stupefied national sentiment kindled in the Jews the race consciousness and the desire for independence that enabled them to preserve their identity throughout centuries of exile and that has recently burst forth in the form of the greatest of modern miracles, the return of the nation to Eretz Israel and to freedom.



On Youth and Age

Dear child, if childish eagerness essayed
 To drink unbidden from the cup of wine
 Some adult has prepared . . . when youths incline
 Their heads aloft to where ideals have strayed,
 And clutching fingers on a peak are stayed;
 If youthful hearts make quite unpeered design
 Upon the nymphs born of supernal line,—
 Should *age* laugh at the insolence displayed?
 Or can a stripling scale the ladder heights
 Dividing young from old and old from young,—
 Till, like in footing, striving side by side,
 They quaff together from earth's cupped delights,
 As peers lamented, and on par unsung,
 Till pitted combat halts their bumptious stride?

BERNARD DOV MILIANS

Lilith

by BERNARD DOV MILANS

1

The summery breeze of the evening
 Played with the gold of her hair.
 She smiled to the stars all aglimmer—
 Smiled to the Bull and the Bear . . .
 Her lover had whispered a secret,
 Adam had whispered of love;
 The flowering chestnut had listened,
 Bending his branches above,—
 So Lilith heard nought of the mutter,
 Of a darkly lurking form,
 She heard but the passionate murmurs
 Catching her up in their storm.

2

"Beloved, beloved,"—he whispered,
 "Many the times you have passed,
 Fading away in the darkness,
 But I have caught you at last.
 Escape is shut off from the arbor,
 Useless to dream of escape—
 For now I have found you, my darling,
 Angel in womankind shape . . .
 Sweet creature you never shall leave me,
 Love will us ever combine,
 Encircling with soul-girdling branches,
 Tangling with clambering vine . . .

3

"Madly I rushed where you led me,
 Slipping untouched from my grasp,
 Luring me on with your laughter—
 Too distant removed from my clasp.
 Love, never—I never shall leave you,
 Pure one who lie by my side,
 Dream only of gentle surrender,
 Serenely engarbed as my bride . . ."
 She laughed, and in whispers she told him
 Of yearnings she dared not confess—
 She laughingly whispered . . . and Adam
 Embraced her with loving caress . . .

4

"The delicate meshes that Cupid
 Spins like a silken cocoon
 Ensnares me with myriads of fibres,
 Me and my handsome dragoon.
 How gently the fibres were tightened!
 Love tightened his net round my soul . . .
 I struggled . . . he drew the strands firmly,
 Thrilling, caressing my whole . . .
 A sweet serenade in the twilight,
 Clearly the nightingale sings
 Accompanied there by my lover,
 Plucking at love's dainty strings.

5

"Thy footsteps I often have followed,
 Listed each footfall at night—
 And, hidden I followed your glances
 Shielded by throngs from your sight . . .
 Each movement of passionate fervor
 Stealthily viewing, each turn,
 Coquettishly fading, appearing.
 Causing your ardor to burn.
 And now, gentle night, I am taken,
 Adrift in a billow-crest sea,
 I yield unreserved to your kisses,
 Joining myself unto thee."

6

"Forever, beloved," she murmured.
 "Forever, he whispered, "for aye—
 Though earth should be crusted beneath us
 With love we shall ever essay . . ."
 Each eve in the calm of the arbor
 They met in a passionate embrace,
 Oft uttering pledges eternal,
 Laughing at time's hoary face . . .
 "Ah never, I never without you
 Shall inhabit the reaches of earth,
 Our souls are as one, for in loving
 We give life its minikin worth."

Days sped . . . she paled, but her blushes
 Still painted her cheeks as with rose . . .
 He saw that his darling was fading,
 Wanly approaching her close . . .
 Each evening the shade of her bower
 Hid the great fear in his breast;
 He kissed the white brow of his birdling
 Leaving her bowery nest . . .
 "Forever, beloved," . . . she murmured,
 "I'll love you," he whispered, "for aye . . .
 Ah nothing—no, nothing must part us,—
 With love we will bravely assay!"

The summery breeze of the evening
 Played with the gold of her hair,
 She smiled to the stars all aglitter—
 She smiled to the Bull and the Bear . . .
 Her lover had whispered his secret,
 Adam had whispered of love—
 The flowering chestnut had listened,
 Bending his branches above—
 So Lilith heard nought of the mutter,
 Saw not death's shadowy form;
 She heard but his passionate murmurs,
 Catching her up in their storm . . .



A Sonnet

Shall I proclaim like sonneteers of old
 A love that even heaven can not bound,—
 That, unrequited, makes the world resound
 With plaintive cry that will not be consoled?
 Shall I relate how often I enfold
 The distant star where you, in dreams, were
 crowned,
 Soon to discover it is fiction, found
 By eyes of one who wishes to behold?
 The ears of time are ringing with lament
 Of lovers ever ready to complain
 And dreamers telling how their days were spent
 In searching for their "peerless one" in vain.
 I, then, shall hide my love within my breast
 And only hope that you can be possessed.

BERNARD DOV MILIANS

The Philosophical Significance of Maimonides

by DR. ALEXANDER LITMAN

To understand Moses Maimonides' position in the history of thought it is necessary to glance at the conceptions of nature and man prevalent in the centuries that intervened between Aristotle and Maimonides. With the march of time the view of nature as an ordered whole yielded gradually but steadily to the conception of nature as a conglomerate of evil forces, and the conception of man as a part of nature gave way to the conception of man as a stranger in a desert. Never was man more disillusioned or more disheartened, never was there greater failure of nerve or less faith in man's abilities to understand the world and his place in it than in the fifteen hundred years that separate Maimonides from Aristotle. But though this loss of heart was bolstered slightly by the Romans in their glorification of political activities, this regained confidence was of short duration. With the substitution of Caesar's dictatorship for the republic the decline continued and the despair became accentuated.

The contempt for the body as the seat of lusts and follies, proclaimed by the dying Socrates and reemphasized in the Gospel, became the program for man's way of living and the pre-requisite for his salvation. Only by freeing the soul from the tyranny and shackles of the body could man aspire to sit at the right hand of Glory and enjoy eternal blessedness. Aristotle's delight in the proud high-mindedness of the Greek gentleman and Cicero's exaltation of the *vir Romanus* gave way to the conception of man as a fallen angel in a hopeless pilgrimage through a valley of tears. And, as the reconnoitering dove in her aimless flight over the lashing waves of the flood longed for the gentle hand of the righteous Noah to return her to the warmth of the ark, so did the soul encased in the prison of the body pine for her return to the bosom of God. Against such tendencies in the

direction of other-worldliness Maimonides determined to emphasize the superiority of the Jewish-Aristotelian naturalism. It was his purpose to show that nature was on the whole an orderly system, that man was a part of nature, and that human blessedness can not be achieved through the transformation or transfiguration of man's being but in completing and perfecting it. Not "there" but "here," not in walking on his head but in walking on his feet can man find his happiness.

Man's earthly happiness constitutes Maimonides' all-embracing interest and the extent to which Maimonides aspired to a knowledge of nature was controlled and guided by the search for this happiness for man. To clarify and further this aim he sought materials in the world at large, in the works of Arabic thinkers, and in biblical and rabbinical dicta. Allegorical interpretations of terms, half-concealed statements of facts, hidden allusions, ambiguous references, and explained-away difficulties could not mar his conviction that the perfection of the human microcosm is a primary aim. Armed with the belief that the realization of the nature of man's make-up is paramount he turned to man as a natural being, an organic whole of matter and form, the foundation and nucleus of all moral values. By insisting that matter is never found without form nor form without matter and by defining form or soul as function, he indicated once and for all the dependence of soul upon the body and the impossibility of their separation except for purposes of discourse. As function soul can no more be dissociated from the organ of which it is a function than vision can be separated from the eye that sees or sharpness from the knife that cuts. He thus dispensed with the Platonic views of soul as a substance forced upon the body and adventi-

tiously united to it, with soul as a dance of Democritean atoms, and with the Augustinian dichotomy between the outer man and the inner man.

But though the term soul denotes a hierarchy of functions beginning with the nutritive, passing through the sensitive, imaginative, and appetitive, and culminating in the intellectual, when applied specifically to man as man it denotes the intellectual function. Without the intellect man is not really man. As Maimonides says: "It is acknowledged that a man who does not possess this 'form' (the nature of which has just been explained) is not human, but a mere animal in human shape and form." Soul presents a continuous series of functions, a series of potentialities and actualities. No higher level is possible without the lower, no sensation without nutrition, no imagination without sensation, and no intellectual activity without the presupposition of a living, feeling and imagining animal.

Having shown the inextricable relation of organ and function and the dependence of the latter upon the former, Maimonides sets forth the ways and means by which man can actualize himself and thus find his happiness. For virtue and vice are not innate in man, ready-made and given to him. It is impossible, says Maimonides, that man should be born endowed by nature from his very birth with either virtue or vice. These are capacities or potentialities to be brought to perfect realization through activities in the world of men and things. To say that virtue is an actuality bestowed upon man or denied him, that he is from his very birth intelligent or stupid, is to repeat the arguments of astrologers and fatalists who say that from all eternity it has been decreed that this or that man should be either virtuous or vicious. Such a view, Maimonides insists, dispenses with all human initiative and makes the entire moral and intellectual life of man impossible. In order that man may work out his nature and thus become virtuous he must enter into active social and political relations and feel himself an agent in shaping them.

It must be understood at the outset that virtue for Maimonides is not an extreme but rather a mean state, a middle path between opposing forces. The virtuous man will be neither ascetic or sensuous, mirthful or desponding, miserly or liberal, cruel or merciful, faint-hearted or bold. In the endeavor to satisfy his nature he will follow the mean discovered by the application of rational insight. Maimonides' insistence upon guidance by the mean must be understood as a polemic against the dogmatic extremism of the various sects of his time. He saw only too clearly the impossibility of harmonizing extremes either within society or within any one individual. Having in his own person felt the cruelties and boundless miseries that accrue to man from fanaticism, he strove for an amelioration of intemperate attitudes. In place of a blind dogmatism that excludes rational procedure and mutilates, if it does not destroy, the moral and social life of man, Maimonides offers the mean as the catharsis of all dogmas and the dissolving acid of all extremes.

In the proper maintenance of his body lies the first step in man's endeavor to realize himself. Every detail necessary for the maintenance and preservation of physical strength and bodily health is laid down by Maimonides with masterly detail and with a thoroughness of which only a disciple of Aesculapius can boast. If man is to exercise his intellectual functions he must never forget the body which supports them. He must know what to eat and when to eat, what to drink, when to bathe, when to work, and when to play. Those, says Maimonides, who deny themselves all bodily pleasures must be condemned in the same fashion as those who glorify them. The proper care of the body and the satisfaction of biologicophysiological needs is not an end in itself. Eating, drinking, and sleeping do not constitute man's purpose and aim in life. Man does not live for the sake of living but for the sake of living well. Maimonides reiterates, "In the world to come, there is neither body nor frame, but the souls only of the righteous dwell therein divested of body."

There is no sensuous paradise of the Moham-medans in which the bodies of the faithful will participate after death. The satisfaction of the body acquires its importance from the fact that it serves as the basis and *conditio sine qua non* of the further realization of man's potentialities. Thus the body is no longer a prison of the soul, a hindrance in man's search for happiness, but its natural dwelling place. It is only the ignorant, Maimonides would say, who think that the attainment of virtue or of knowledge of the universe can be accomplished on condition of an Icarus-like flight from the body. Even as "the light dove, piercing in her easy flight the air and perceiving its resistance, imagines that flight would be easier still in empty space." Man can walk with his head in the sky only because he walks with his body on earth.

Perfect bodily health is to be considered godly because only then can man be led to a true knowledge of Him. When properly managed the body is the organ of the soul and not merely the source of loves, lusts, fears, fancies, idols, and follies that prevent us from the proper exercise of our rational faculties. "Suppose," says Maimonides, "one should say: since jealousy, lust, ambition, and the like passions, are bad, and tend to bring man to an untimely end, I will withdraw from them altogether, and remove to the other extreme—and in this he might go so far as even not to eat meat, not to drink wine, not to take a wife, not to reside in a respectable dwelling house, and not to put on any proper garments, but only sackcloth, or coarse wool, or the like, just as the idolatrous priests do,—we should object to this also as being an evil way, and unlawful to pursue, and he who walks in this way is called a sinner." Participation in the divine does not presuppose the stifling and suffocation of natural desires but their completion in accordance with the mean. If for the neo-Platonists the contemplation of Pure Being required the abandonment of the body, for Maimonides the demands of the body required the abandonment of consecration to Pure Being.

In the attempt to provide the bare necessities of life man is thrust upon others for help. He is not a self-sufficient being as the fifth-century sophists took him to be, nor can he live in complete isolation, for a being so isolated would soon perish because of his inability to secure those things which his nature requires. More than that. Man is essentially a political animal and can only realize himself in the social organism of which he is a product. To become an actuality, virtue must be practised, it must be exercised in relationships between man and his neighbor. Without this actual exercise man can neither be called just, liberal, or righteous. If man is to act justly he must find himself in the proper social medium. In his insistence that the moral character of the individual depends upon society, Maimonides echoes the cry of the Hebrew prophets for social justice, although their poetical zeal yields to the prose of the mean and their superabundant generosity to the calculating coolness of political sagacity.

Unfortunately the persecutions Maimonides had witnessed from his early boyhood and the nomadic life he was compelled to lead prevented him from composing a treatise on the best form of political organization in the manner of a Plato, an Aristotle, a Cicero or a Thomas Aquinas. But from his insistence upon man as a political animal and his emphasis upon the importance of social life it is clear how fundamentally vital he regarded moral and political activities for the realization of man as man. Indeed, so vital were these relationships for Maimonides that he felt they controlled the whole intellectual life of man and that the character of man's knowledge of nature would depend upon the degree of his successful adjustment in his moral and social life. It is not the social outcast, not the man who separates himself from others, not the dweller in catacombs or hermitages, it is rather the man firmly rooted in society, who is prepared to commune with Pure Form. For man, according to Maimonides, is not a knower, a passive contemplator, a disinterested

spectator in a cosmic drama; he is mainly a doer, an active agent in a moral and social context. Here Maimonides follows Aristotle's distinction between the absolute actuality of the Prime Mover and the most total and continuous happiness of man. Whereas God as Pure Form eternally contemplates, man's *summum bonum* as a moral and social being consists in the fact that he is able to imitate divinity only *sometimes*. Man is a social being with some moments of solitude, and not a lonely thinker with some social moments. God must be worked for; in order to achieve divinity one must be a participator in all human activities.

The final stage in man's search for earthly happiness consists in the knowledge and love of God. But though such knowledge is the ultimate goal of man as man, it does not consist in a direct intuition or embrace of God; it is not an immediate grasp of the essence of God. "Another accepted axiom of metaphysics," says Maimonides, "is that human reason can not fully conceive God in His true essence, because of the perfection of God's essence and the imperfection of our reason, and because His essence is not due to causes through which it may be known. The inability of our reason to comprehend may be compared to the inability of our eyes to gaze at the sun, not because of the weakness of the sun's light, but because the light is more powerful than that which seeks to gaze into it." Whatever knowledge of God man may be able to acquire, that knowledge must be mediated by the senses. It is from the raw materials presenting themselves in sense-perception that reason is able to extract universal principles. Reason performs its operations only as a consequence of the contact of the human body with things. In his insistence upon the importance of sensory experience Maimonides follows the Aristotelian-Scholastic tradition that nothing can be in the mind which is not in the senses before.

In denying the possibility of man's jump into divine essence Maimonides dealt a death-blow to all Platonists and mystics for whom knowledge of

God without the mediation of the senses, direct intuition of God, was the acme of bliss and perfection. He clasps hands with authoritative Jewish and Aristotelian doctrines that while some may walk *with* God it is impossible for anyone to walk *in* God. Thus, as the Romans built a system of duties around their republican virtues to keep them free from foreign contamination, and as the Hebrew sages built a fence around the Law to keep it intact, so did Maimonides construct a fence around God's essence to glorify the moral and intellectual life of man on earth.

More than that. By insisting that God's essence is beyond man's ken and that the study of God must be approached only by a well-adjusted moral and social individual Maimonides dispenses with any partial and one-sided view of the cosmos. The universe, of which God is the form or the actuality of actualities or the highest genus, must not be seen through a partial defeat or success obtained in man's communal life. He would have man know that success and defeat are inherent in earthly life and that they must not be employed as points of departure or as categories for the understanding of nature as a whole. He would in one breath damn the Leibnizian optimism, which proclaims this to be the best of all possible worlds, and turn in dismay from the self-contained Schopenhauerian motto that this is the worst of all possible worlds. Give up your prejudices, control your fancies, dispel your illusions, repeats Maimonides again and again, study logic, mathematics, and natural science, and then will you be able to approach nature with a single mind and an open heart. For those who approach nature through the phantoms of their brain will endeavor to adjust things to their prejudices and will thus be unable to see things in their true relationships. "We merely maintain," says Maimonides, "that the earlier Theologians, both of the Greek Christians and of the Mohammedans, when they laid down their propositions, did not investigate the real properties of things; first of all they considered what must be the properties of the things which should

yield proof for or against a certain creed; and when this was found they asserted that the thing must be endowed with those properties; then they employed the same assertion as a proof for the identical arguments which led to the assertion, and by which they either supported or refuted a certain opinion . . . *I tell you, however, as a general rule, that Themistius was right in saying that the properties of things can not adapt themselves to our opinions, but our opinions must be adapted to the existing properties.*" (Italics mine.) It is clear therefore that true knowledge can not be obtained by smothering nature in a fanciful formula but that whimsical concoctions must be given up for the sake of intellectual insight.

Although immediate knowledge of God is impossible, knowledge of His nature can be obtained through His works, and it is through contact with the variety of things in the universe and through a grasp of the forms exhibited by these things that man can arrive at true knowledge of the Form of Forms. "You, however, know," says Maimonides, "how all these subjects are connected together; for there is nothing else in existence but God and His works, the latter including all existing things besides Him; we can only obtain a knowledge of Him through His works; His works give evidence of His existence, and show what must be assumed concerning Him, that is to say, what must be attributed to Him either affirmatively or negatively." This knowledge of the works of God consists in the understanding of the field of action, of the myriads of particular substances, the orderly succession of natural processes, and the laws governing these processes. The universe is discovered to be a stable entity and not a haphazard configuration of atoms. Just as the human body constitutes a microcosm so does the universe, whose parts are inter-related to form an organic whole, constitute a macrocosm. But in spite of the fact that the universe is governed by laws and exhibits an all-pervading order it is not a strictly deterministic system as the Mutakallimim took it to be. It is instead an open universe in

which the reign of order does not preclude the occurrence of novelty and change. Maimonides' polemic against determinism and his endeavor to reconcile order with novelty must be understood in terms of his all-embracing interest in man's earthly happiness. Just as in the social and political life man must feel himself an active agent in working out his own nature and in identifying himself with society, so must he feel himself a factor in the universe of which he is a part. Man can not feel at home in a world fated from all eternity to remain as it is. In the light of these considerations it is not difficult to see why Maimonides fought against the notion of the eternity of the universe, an idea identical for him with strict determinism.

An unbiased and dispassionate knowledge of nature teaches us that things were not made specifically for man in order that he might enjoy them. They do not come into being to serve man, although by discovering their natures and purposes man can employ them for his use. "I consider therefore," says Maimonides, "the following opinion as most correct according to the teaching of the Bible, and best in accordance with the results of philosophy; namely, that the Universe does not exist for man's sake, but that each being exists for its own sake, and not because of some other thing." Through the application of reason it is possible to discover the place and value each thing has in the scheme of the universe as a whole, and it is only through reason that man can learn to control things for his benefit.

When man arrives at such an intellectual view of nature he truly knows and loves God, and this love of God it is which constitutes his supreme blessedness. Through this knowledge he becomes a member in the cosmic order and feels at home in it, just as through moral knowledge he becomes a member in the social order. And it is in the harmonious synthesis of the human and the divine, the moral and the intellectual, the material and the spiritual, that man finds his fullest realization and his highest happiness on earth.

The philosophy of Maimonides is not that of a lonely contemplator drawing a faith for living out of an intellectual love and total embrace of God. His ideas are not the outcome of a spiritual resurrection attendant upon rejection by the world and man. He is not a solitary thinker spinning universal panaceas from the pinnacle of despair or devising a universal formula of Happiness that would apply to all men under all conditions. Man's happiness does not consist in a selfless devotion to infinite Being or in an absorption in the One of Plotinus. Spiritual life, according to Maimonides, does not consist in a laughter of Democritus or in the cry of despair of an Ecclesiastes that "All is vanity;" there is no Epicurean garden or Painted Porch of the Stoics in which to find refuge from the defeats and frustrations of this world. Human life is no longer an accidental occurrence in a universal pandemonium, a Platonic *meditatio mortis*, an ante-chamber to the world to come, or a longing for a sensuous paradise. Neither the persecutions which he witnessed nor his personal misfortunes could mar his conviction that the ideal must spring from the

natural and not the reverse, that human blessedness can not be dissociated from its material basis, and that immortality can only be achieved in living and not in dying. If the neo-Platonists exalted the transcendental realm of Ideas as the natural dwelling place of the human spirit, Maimonides exalted the realm of nature as the womb and matrix of all spiritual values. "... here," cries Maimonides, "*is man's world, here is his home, in which he has been placed, and of which he is himself a portion.*" (Italics mine.)

In this emphasis upon man's earthly existence lies the philosophical significance of Maimonides. He suggested a way of life that required more reason and less authority, more analysis and less enthusiasm, more searching and less quibbling, more action and fewer words. And in praising Maimonides we can do no better than apply to him the celebrated dictum of Aristotle: "When one man said, then, that reason was present—as in animals, so throughout nature—as the cause of order and of all arrangements, he seemed like a sober man in contrast with the random talk of his predecessors."



MAIMONIDES AND THE PRESENT GENERATION

(Continued from page 14)

men of wisdom and insight. Spiritually famished mankind will continue to discover the sages of Israel and their essentially constructive and spiritual message and foremost among them Maimonides, true citizen of the world.

As we contemplate the life of Maimonides, man of destiny, the glory of his mind, the unique beauty and nobility of his spirit and the completeness and achievements of his life, we stand in reverence of man's unlimited capacity for understanding of the infinite, inherent qualities of the chosen ones. The blessed life of Maimonides

has made for greater righteousness and happiness of his people and to this day helps inspire us to a life of deeper meaning, of greater harmony with the ultimate source of life, light and goodness—God.

It is in this spirit of reverence and humility—his spirit—that we celebrate the eight-hundred years of life of this Tsadik—the name by which his great son Abraham usually designates him. Especially true of Maimonides is the dictum of our sages: "Greater are the righteous in death than in life."

Silence

by ELIAS LEVI

The home of the Marks family was renowned within "knowing distance" as the receptacle of that abstract substance called Silence—that deep incomparable stillness which reigns supreme in graveyards, when the wind is absent and the slumbering foliage has ceased its rustling. Here lived and moved two phantom-like figures—a father and an only son—who flitted noiselessly about the rooms, strictly avoiding conversation, each living in the limitless, unexplored region of his own thoughts and bearing his own burdens. David Marks, the master of the household (though the only other inmate was his son), sat invariably at the head of the table, with the ponderous volume of the Talmud before him, meditating upon its text (for he always assiduously studied in silence), and occasionally pulling out a stained grimy cloth (a sort of handkerchief) from the pocket of his long coat, to wipe his perspiring forehead. He was a tall, strong man in his early sixties, with a closely-cropped grey beard, and bore his age astonishingly well. As though bound by a terrible oath which could never be expunged, David dreaded to disturb this heavy, brooding stillness; for his long years of tailoring, from which he had retired with a tidy sum invested for the proverbial rainy day, had taught him—if nothing else—to sit speechless and motionless like the statue of Buddha, gazing blankly into space.

What a profound change everything had undergone since he had lost his "jewel"—the companion of his earthly pilgrimage. The Reaper had gathered her into His harvest while she was yet in the prime of life. But David was not without his consolation, for she had left him with an only son Nathaniel, "the gift of the Lord," who was then five years old. A time there was when faithful Ruth, his wife—peace be upon her soul in the abode of the blessed—supplied the tangible

link between him and the child who was the delight of his eyes. A meek, timid woman she was, of stunted physique and intellect, whose comprehension of things was very limited, but who, splendid little woman, could not harm a fly even if she wanted to. Ruth lived in total dissociation from all intellectual effort, for her mental activity was hindered by gross physical actualities. Bound to a purely domestic routine, she could claim only a few minor accomplishments, but for fully fifteen years she had been his trusty partner in life, the confidante of his joys, hopes, and dreams, the soother of his great sorrows; and he had not found her wanting. "A woman of superlative goodness," he boasted of her. She was a shining epitome of that class of womanhood which gives itself up ungrudgingly in absolute devotion to its menfolk; she nursed him in his illnesses, and busied herself sensibly with all those details of comfort for his sake, which reflected her tender feelings towards him, and her homely manners and methods always met with his approval and praise. When she had completed her household duties she would sit opposite him—who was steeped in the delights and rigorous discipline of the Talmud—and dread to attempt any trifling conversation, lest she thereby commit the grievous sin of "Bittul Torah" and consequently bring upon herself the perdition of her soul both in this present world and in the future existence. Instead she would sit silent, and allow her mind to wander aimlessly, now and again admiring the dark, meditative eyes of her husband, his broad and intellectual brow; her patient and long-suffering face would shine with delight, and a benevolent smile ever played at the corners of her thin-lipped, ashen-white mouth. In the spiritual realm especially, Ruth allowed herself to be shepherded by her husband. She had a fixed no-

tion that her husband's scriptural studies would provide a passport to Heaven, where they would be elevated to the status of sitting on golden thrones, with crowns on their heads, along with the other righteous.

But alas, Ruth's constant, excruciating rheumatic pains never left her; they ravaged figure and face. She shrank and shrivelled up before her time. For countless, dreary weeks she lay on her bed—her countenance expressing suffering—like a pregnant woman convulsed with the pangs of childbirth—until the Angel of Death fluttered his wings over her bedchamber and her spirit vanished to the Yeshiva Shel Ma'la. And with the passing of Ruth a portentous silence came and settled down in her place, that seemed to take on a mysterious Promethean figure, towering above father and son and ready to smite them down if they articulated but a single word.

Nathaniel, the son, deprived of feminine care and concern from early childhood (for his mother died before he was capable of retaining any reminiscences of her), was left alone with his tragic thoughts, and as a consequence of his loneliness grew up to be a shy and sensitive youth. The house seemed to impress his mind with its haunting unhappiness. He felt his mouth gagged by the hands of a strong and powerful presence as soon as he crossed its threshold, and as though to relieve himself from this heavy, oppressive atmosphere, he was seldom at home. It was rumored that he consoled himself with amorous adventures, and his father was disturbed and agitated by the close secrecy with which he succeeded in shrouding his movements. An impassable barrier seemed to separate father and son. As immiscible as oil and water, so David and Nathaniel could not learn to appreciate and understand each other; for the perceptions of maturity are often restricted and sapless, but "the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts." Thus these two, so near each other by reason of their affinity of blood, were yet so distant from each other in their thoughts and deeds, living in complete detach-

ment from each other. But as Nathaniel would pass by his father to go to his vocation (he was a teacher in the unpretentious local school) the fond father would be transported to the seventh heaven of bliss, for he joyfully anticipated the day when this blossom of his happy married life—the pale, slight, keen-featured youth of twenty-two—would marry, which, pray God, would not be remote. Thus of late there was an irrepressible, secret joy within his breast, and a perceptible liteness in his footsteps, and slowly and steadily he would build his airy castle in the course of his day-dreams. But one day his whole spurious edifice suddenly fell to bits, and he found himself in the nadir of disappointment, for Nathaniel had passed the door and—Lord have mercy—had failed to kiss the Mezuzah on the door post. All his best hopes had dissolved into nothingness, had vanished like an iridescent soap-bubble, for it was a step further to a bleak realisation of the fact that his son treated with utter disregard the customs and ceremonies that are the *raison d'être* of every Jew. So David fasted and prayed for his son's sin of omission, and, sad and stricken, beat a retreat from the elusive happiness of the doubtful future and gave himself up in philosophical resignation to his books. But Nathaniel was in the dark about the whole affair.

The mighty dreamer, Nathaniel Marks, love-lorn and misunderstood, sat in the first-class, fawn-coloured compartment of the train. Beside him was a slender, attractive gentile maiden, displaying her pertly pretty face and slim legs. There were no other occupants in the compartment. Presently amid the hustle and roaring noise of a railway station the heavy door was slammed, and the train snorted away, and as it clanked and rumbled along it seemed to say goodbye to the past: the town and all his friends and acquaintances: his father whom he had disillusioned in his sunset days.

Suddenly he shivered and turned chilly and thought of home and safety. His heart went out to his aged father, who seemed to symbolize

everything that he had left behind. It made him sad and sick. Copious tears poured down his cheeks, and he clenched his hands over his chest as though about to lacerate it, so vehemently bitter was the train of thoughts that entered his soul.

At last, however, he submitted philosophically to the force of circumstances that had compelled him to take such a step. Love was indestructible; it acknowledged neither racial nor religious boundary lines. The confidence of his comrade was infectious. His heart warmed towards her; he straightened his back and inwardly resolved to do her credit. She gave him one of those fascinating smiles of hers, when every one of her teeth shone like an oriental beryl. Fortified by it, he discarded the burden of his heart-searchings. It gave him just that pleasant sense of security of which he was in dire need; he gasped with relief. His emotional mood overwhelmed him, and he glorified in the idea of his supreme sacrifice for the kindred soul by his side, for Nathaniel had an instinct for getting the full flavour of an experience.

Once more he gazed in rapt wonder and admiration at the imposing beauty of her countenance; once more he heard her exuberant voice and he was again obliged to pay attention to her. He lost consciousness of everything but the girl alongside of him. She symbolized the quintessence of what his victory meant to him. With her, Life would be vested with new meaning, clothed with new magnificence, and crowned with new majesty. At that moment he felt big; he utterly despised the whole world. Everything was behind, but the glorious future was in front.

In aggrieved seclusion, David Marks sat as usual at the head of the table. His eyes gazed down upon the holy volume open before him, but today they could not continue their roving quest after the great truths of the Word. To-day for the first time in his life, he could not concentrate upon the text, for everything was blurred

and indistinct to his eyes. The whole world seemed to revolve in a demoniac dance around him. His soul was sour, his heart bleak, his mind bitter, his eyes leaden. How he had aged since the calamitous days of his son's desertion! His shoulders drooped, crushed beneath the burden of his sorrows. His crisp hair had lost its colour—a sure sign of worry. The blue, velvet skull-cap that crowned his head accentuated the distressing paleness of his complexion. The deadly white face, haggard and seamed and lined, registered the boundless sorrow which he was undergoing. He could not but think with affectionate regret for the departed transgressor. It was the greatest tragedy in his life; in losing his son he had lost everything near and dear to him and he felt as if he had left everything a great distance behind. The last link with the physical world had snapped like a thin thread, and in vain he tried to dislocate his mind from terrestrial affairs, finally attempting to console his sense of failure and unhappiness by turning to that ideal companion of every Jew in every affliction—the consoling Word of God.

David felt his whole flesh burning within him: every fiber of his whole physical being quivered from the shock. For many long minutes he sat rigid and motionless as Death. With difficulty, he tried to reconstruct his life from those very remote beginnings: how abject, inglorious, and squalid seemed the closing chapter of his life. He wanted to pierce the air with his anguished cries, but suddenly a cold tremour ran through his veins: the stony stillness of the atmosphere seemed to take on some tangible shape like the furniture and walls of the room. It seemed to expand and take the form of a hooded giant with clumsy expostulating arms. David felt the evil presence of this important, mysterious being and bowed his head in fear and shame.

And as a Master governs his Slave with absolute sway, so did this Olympian-like Silence bind his cruel iron fetters around this humble, quiet man and claim him as his victim.

The Eternal Mind of the Eternal People

by DAVID W. PETEGORSKY

Aristotle's assertion that "all men desire to know" enunciated a fundamental truth of human nature. And if Aristotle designated as "men" only the Greeks, it was because of his conviction that only those of Hellas could achieve knowledge. From time immemorial this "desire to know" has prodded man in his search for divine secrets, for the "Open, Sesame" that will reveal to man's view the vast vista of universal knowledge.

In this never-ending quest, three approaches dominate the field of human thought, the Greek, the Roman, and the Jewish. These three great cultures, that were conceived in antiquity, have recorded their impress on human speculation in a manner that renders the influence of even the former two, a living and vital one in our own day. Each is characterized by a distinctiveness that makes it possible for us to speak of a "mind," characteristically Greek, Roman, or Jewish. The nature of these respective genii and a proper understanding of the peculiarly Jewish traits of mind may go far in explaining the immortality of the Jewish nation. The Greek and Roman cultures speak their message to the world, garbed in the raiment of more modern civilizations, or through the musty pages of tattered books. The Jewish mind persists and addresses itself to humanity through living exemplifiers of the practical value of its profound philosophical teachings. The Greek and Roman minds scintillated during their respective hey-days. Exhausted by their spurt into the glorious heights of supremacy, they fell by the wayside. Jewish thought continued its steady gait and marched through history even to the modern era.

The Greeks brought to bear on the universe and its problems an approach essentially intellectual. Mind, they felt, was an ideal plumbing line with which to fathom the depths of the uni-

verse. Everything could be explained in terms and categories of mind. Thus they initiated that all-inclusive search that extended not only to the realm of the purely physical sciences but to the study of human and social relationships as well. All aspects of existence were to be approached from the perspective of mind. To abstract the general from the particular, the universal from the specific, was their major preoccupation. The Greek was then primarily a contemplator. The field of positive action did not represent the sphere of his activities. He shone as a thinker rather than as a doer.

But the star of Greece waned and that of Rome rose to dazzle the horizon. Like the Eagle which symbolized its essence, the Roman genius gave to the world a philosophy of action. To conquer not in the domain of ideas but in the physical sense was the ambition of Rome—an ambition that it realized as its armies marched through country after country, taking possession of the soil in the name of the Empire. Philosophy and speculation were pursuits for the aged and the infirm. Able-bodied human beings must concern themselves with physical exploits. Politics and economics were the doors through which one could enter upon an understanding of the universe. Abstract thought opened on a blind alley in which people wandered aimlessly and to no purpose. Progress can be realized only by energy and forcefulness.

Shining forth in the chaos of ideas like a beacon that was not dimmed by the flashes of radiance that momentarily outshone its glow, the Jewish mind directed life in different channels. Combining thought and action, theory and practice, into a practical doctrine of life, its sobering influence was felt as both Christianity and Mohammedanism borrowed prolifically from it in spread-

ing their doctrines to millions of people. It established man not as a chance wanderling in space but as an essential part of the natural process. Human initiative was restored as a factor determining the course of events. Morality was neither a set of rarefied abstractions nor petty trivialities that must be lightly regarded in the triumphant sweep to empire. Rather, it was the application of spiritual values to situations prevailing in every-day life. It brought the contemplative Greek down from his ethereal throne and raised the cold, stolid Roman from the ground. Man was accorded a position in the universe in which he could find peace and happiness.

Any approach to an understanding of life is of necessity colored by the doctrine of reality that underlies it. A philosopher must seek to understand the real and the actual before he can presume to discuss the fundamental aspects of existence. Is reality embodied in a system of universal concepts and ideals or is it to be found in cold, brute, inert matter? Is the actual to be sought in the realm of the mind, in those ideas which we perceive only in thought, or does it lie in the atomistic configurations we see and feel? Do our senses deceive us and record only an illusory world of non-realities, or is our mind a knave, concocting images and airy concepts that have but a fantastic existence? General or particular, matter or form, spirit or nature,—which is the myth and which the reality?

The ever-recurring strain of this problem runs in an undercurrent through the entire history of philosophic speculation. Its manifold aspects find expression in every thinker of note. In early Greek thought, Heraclitus and Parmenides had already enunciated the problem in its most elementary terms. To Parmenides, reality lay in the world of static entities. Being can be understood only in terms of universal ideas. Change, motion, development, are unreal and chimerical. In our daily life we cannot embrace the permanent and durable. Only the transient and the accidental lie within our grasp. For Heraclitus, on the

other hand, a fluxing world of particular objects represented the actual. Change rather than permanence, particular rather than general, express reality in its highest form. Since their time, the stream of philosophic thought has burrowed two parallel channels, following the original course of either Heraclitus or Parmenides. Others have tried at various times to bridge the gap between both by an harmonization of these extreme positions. Usually the extremists have been modified by those of more temperate views. Plato, for example, though recognizing to a partial degree the Heraclitean world of particulars, apotheosizes Parmenides' realm of concepts. The World of Ideas becomes to him the ultimate reality. Specific entities achieve significance only as they partake of the universal ideas. His disciple Aristotle attempts a fusion of the general and the particular. The blending of matter and form in the creation of the actual is the expression of his attempt to avoid an extremist view by a successful compromise. Augustine, the Platonist, is followed in the development of Catholic doctrine by Aquinas, the Aristotelian. Maimonides, the Naturalist, rebels against the Platonism of Philo and of Judah Halevi. Hegel, preaching the absolutism of Geist, induces by reaction Marx, insisting on the material basis of all moral and spiritual values. In general, we can distinguish two antithetically opposed view-points battling for supremacy. The Idealists, who could claim as their members such dignitaries as Plato and Augustine, Hegel and Kant, assert the reality of Ideas, of Spirit, of Geist, of Mind. Particularizations, matter, physical entities, have no inherent significance; only as they manifest the continuity of ideas do they acquire a meaning of their own. Everything must be explained in categories of mind, of concepts. Nature, *per se*, does not constitute reality. It must be viewed, instead, as spirit. In contradistinction to this strain of thought are the arguments of the Mechanical Materialists. Democritus and Hobbes, Holbach and Feuerbach, struggling valiantly for the cause, espouse the

reality of the physical world and the specific objects within it. The world becomes a purely quantitative affair. Everything is reduced to brute matter. The motion of atoms or matter in void, their arrangement in manifold formations, account for the existence of specific entities and the diversity of things. Hence, unlike Aristotle and Maimonides, the Mechanists deny the existence of qualities or spiritual forces. The former, though asserting that form or spirituality are notional unless united with the material, nevertheless fully recognize its actuality. Hobbes, on the contrary, repudiates the validity of all moral considerations. Matter in motion offers the explanation for the state of affairs that obtains at any given period. Concepts, morals, mind, are a fleeting fantasy—categories we ourselves have created to aid us in a classification of the objects around us for the relationships into which we enter with our fellow-beings.

The implications of this problem are as profound as they are numerous. Within their scope lies the entire realm of human speculation. Our doctrine of the universe and of man, of society and its history, are directly determined by our notion of reality.

The reality of this world and the existence of a hereafter, a problem that has formed the basis of a controversy that figures prominently in the history of philosophy, are theses that are conditioned by our concept of the actual. Does the world we perceive constitute our only abode, or does man pass after life has left him into a higher form of existence? Must man regard himself merely a visitor on earth, sojourning for a brief moment before entering eternal life, or must he consider his notion of the world-to-come an illusory nonentity. A kindred problem confronts us when we seek to understand the nature of man. Shall we regard man as a novel configuration of atoms, fundamentally no different from, and really part and parcel of, the material world? Does man approach nearer to his self-realization when he identifies himself with his material environment,

when he forsakes the non-existent entities that his imaginative mind has concocted? Or shall we regard man as standing spellbound before the vast vista of Universal Ideas and increasing in stature as he merges with and finds a place in the continuity of spiritual values? In short, is man merely a child of nature, whose life and conduct is not merely conditioned but determined by the play on him of the material forces of which he constitutes a part, or is he a son of the gods who acquires significance as he unites with and loses himself in the spiritual elements of the universe?

The Idealists if they are to carry their convictions to their logical conclusion must affirm that, while this world may have a relative reality, absolute existence is embodied only in the afterworld. Life after death is more fundamentally real than earthly existence. Thus Plotinus regards the world as a conglomerate of evil forces that debase man's true being. Man must, therefore, lead a life of asceticism. He must deny himself physical pleasure and material enjoyment, regarding other-worldliness as the acme of perfection. Man must strive for independence from temporal and spatial relationships, a release from illusory and unreal attachments and seek absorption into the stream of the timeless, infinite, conceptual world.

The Mechanist, on the other hand, ridicules the belief in immortality as a myth without substance. Man's last heart beat signalizes his descent into eternal oblivion. His flesh decomposes into dust, his bones feed the worms—and his existence is a closed book. Therefore, they assert, let man live while he may. Let him enjoy the benefits of this world to the fullest degree. Man sinks into the mire of materialism, blind to the higher values of life.

But man, according to either of these views, is stripped of his individuality. He is denied the opportunity of realizing a fulness in his life that can render it richer and more meaningful. If the Idealist unites man with the continuity of spiritual forces, he divorces him from his relationship to

the physical world. He disappears as an individual entity when, striving for his self-realization, he becomes absorbed into a higher reality, be it God, Spirit, Nous, or Geist. Materialism, though it establishes man as an integral and vital part of nature, denies him participation in the more noble realms of existence. Plotinus would have us throw off the shackles of our physical being and climb the ladder of emanations until we are at one with the One. Modern science, at the other extreme, would divest man of that which renders him distinctive among living beings and would reduce him to an atom in infinity. We become microscopic grains in the sands of eternity. Both agree, however, that man in his highest stage of perfectibility either vanishes into the world of concepts or becomes unidentifiable among a mass of substances. Man, as an arrangement of nerves and cells, as a thinking, feeling, perceiving creature, unique in that he achieves completion neither as Pure Form nor as Pure Matter, does not exist.

Our philosophy of history which will form the basis of our social outlook is in turn dependent for its nature on our concept of reality. For history is primarily the interpretation, rather than the recital, of events and movements as we view them in retrospect. We can utilize many vantage points in examining and analyzing the forces making for social and historical change—and in every instance our perspective is determined by what we consider the real and the actual. If concepts and ideas embody the highest actuality, then history will be seen through the lenses of the mind or spirit. Thus to Hegel, for example, history becomes the unfolding of ideas, the development of the Geist, as it passes through successive stages of thesis and antithesis until it finally resolves all contradictions in the all-embracing synthesis embodied in the Geist. Changes in social or economic organization represent our imperfect attempts to concretize the Geist in its latest expression. The content of history, then, becomes logical. Material factors do not operate inde-

pendently of Spirit. They act at the beck and call of Geist. Should we contend, however, that ideas are but the ethereal vagaries of our romantic minds, then the only actual forces in the world are to be sought in matter and nature. The laws governing change and determining growth are inherent in matter and express themselves first in matter. The process of cause and effect is now reversed. Ideas, rather than being the prime force making for social evolution, become the offspring of development as determined by physical factors. Thus, Democritus and Hobbes, regarding the universe as a composite of atoms, would interpret history as the repeated manifestation of the principles of physical relationships. Viewing life as a mad orgy of matter and substances in motion, they see history as a disjointed, piece-meal phenomenon, rather than as an organismic whole. Its nature however, they agree, is determined by the laws of physical bodies. Change is induced not by the metamorphosis of ideas but by the mutation of elements.

Both these interpretations of historical phenomena clasp hands at one point—in their negation of man as a factor with which we must reckon in the historical process. They would deny him a vital role in the eternal drama of history. The Mechanists and the Idealists must accept determinism if they are to be consistent in their outlook. Eternal concepts cherish no respect for man's puny efforts. They march on inexorably, ignoring all human attempts to stem their progress. Man can do nothing toward altering the course or nature of universal entities. They operate independently of him, far beyond his reach and influence. The universe is not as it is for Aristotle, for Maimonides or for Bergson, an "open one," in which chance, mutation or sports are within the realm of possibility. Nor does man achieve a more important position if he regards history as determined by laws inherent in nature. The Newtonian world-machine operates under laws that spring from the nature of things, immutable rules that are dictated by the constitu-

tion of the physical world. Man himself is an infinitesimal part of the natural process. He is nothing more than a tiny cog in the tremendous machine, in the determination of whose policy he exercises no control. The principles of nature are over and above him, steam-rolling their way through the ages, decreeing the political, economic, and social set-up of the world. The dance of the atoms sweeps up man in its surge and forces him to join in the revelry. A rigid determinism that embraces every aspect of life within its scope is the logical, faithful conclusion of the Idealist or the Mechanist. The latter, it is true, can predict the future in its broader outlines. Through observation of his material environment he can formulate symbols expressing the operation of natural and physical forces. Thus Marx can create from the experiences of the past a dialectic enabling him to foresee with some degree of accuracy the trend of coming development. But this power of predictability cannot alter fate a whit. The knowledge of these laws does not imply the ability to control their functioning. The machine grinds on relentlessly. The Idealist cannot aspire even to this degree of prophecy. Infinite entities are so far removed from man that he can never know them to any appreciable extent. Their ways must always remain enshrouded in mystery. The position of the Idealist is nowhere more clearly illustrated than in Spengler's "Decline of the West," the most modern exposition of Hegelianism. Man, in either doctrine, must therefore stand, gazing helplessly at the arena in which the panorama of history is being enacted, not a participant in the universal pageant, but the spectator watching the play of ideas or the sport of material forces. He is a puppet in the hands of forces over which he can exercise no control.

That neither of these doctrines can serve as a way of life for man is obvious from our foregoing discussion. The one wrests him from his material surroundings and bids him live in the clouds. He must soar on the wings of abstraction to a world of infinite entities and universal ideas. The other

would submerge man in nature, counselling him to lie supinely in the dust and to remain oblivious to everything above the surface of the ground. Idealism leads us to a life of asceticism, to an undue magnification of the importance of the other world; mechanism implies a rejection of the possibility of its existence. If the former deemphasizes this world to an extent that renders man's orientation within it difficult of realization, the latter exaggerates its role in life to the exclusion of all higher and nobler values. Hobbes' insistence on the non-reality of spiritual essences is no healthier an attitude than Plotinus' conviction of the evil inherent in the material aspect of things. Both these approaches to an understanding of the universe rob man of his individuality. Human life as a novel category of existence disappears as it becomes merely another department of spirit or another modification of matter. Human initiative loses its efficacy as a determinant of history as man degenerates into a football kicked around in the play of Ideas or toyed with by material forces. He is leashed to his fate by a rigid determinism from which there can be no escape.

Man plods onward in his quest for happiness. For his own welfare he must reject the helping hand that the Idealist and the Mechanist have proffered him. He must take refuge in a more organismic interpretation of life. He must formulate a more integrated view of reality, one that unites every aspect of his experience into a synchronous, more meaningful whole. The chant of life must fall on his ear like a vast symphony of voices, each adding to the richness and fulness of the whole as it wells up toward him. Phenomena about him must not be distorted in an attempt to fit them into the mold of preconceived notions but must be explained in terms of his own experience. Man must be permitted, yes, encouraged, to enjoy the good things of this world. Yet we must not temper his happiness with affliction by disinheriting him of his share in the world to come. He must be accorded a higher status in the universal process than that which the Idealists

or the Mechanists are willing to concede him. The development of a full personality becomes possible only when man is made to feel that he is neither the slave of spirit nor the prisoner of matter, but a free man in his own right.

As we thus become cognizant of the necessity of shifting our emphasis from the universe to man, the position of the Jewish mind in the development of thought becomes one of supreme importance. Grasping the extreme views we have discussed by the hand, it marches to man and offers itself to him as a mode of life that can bring him happiness. It is concerned not with cosmic speculations but with considerations of man's welfare. Man's psychic and physical peculiarities, his relation to the universe and to society, to God and to his fellow-men, are the primary considerations to which Judaism devotes itself. Thus the dogmatic statement with which the Torah begins, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," is actually of profound importance for man's happiness. It is unnecessary for us to devote our time and energies to efforts to understand the nature of the universe and of matter. Cosmic speculations are of little pragmatic value to man. That the world was created by an Omnipotent Being is all that it is necessary for us to know of its nature.

Thus, where other philosophers gazed into their crystal balls and contemplated the cosmos, Judaism turned to man. Where other systems formulated theories about the universe in which man became only incidental and into which he was later made to fit, Judaism developed a doctrine of man. He became for it the most important figure in Creation, the one which merited most serious consideration. Man may appear a negligible unit in the speculative design of other systems of thought; in Judaism he bulks large as the center of its doctrine. Rather than fashioning their concepts to harmonize with man's nature, other thinkers compressed him into a multiplicity of shapes to make him conform to their preconceived notions.

Their philosophy is not made for man; man is made for their philosophy. Judaism, on the contrary, is a body of thought and action directed specifically to the well-being of man. Its dogmas and precepts thus acquire a decidedly pragmatic aspect as they operate to orientate man in the universe and as they establish and maintain wholesome social and moral relationships.

Judaism, like other doctrines, approaches life with a concept of reality. It sees the world neither as a chance collocation of atoms nor as a bodiless conglomeration of ideas. Life is essentially a fusion of the spiritual and the material. Specific bodies must embody in their formation a material basis. They are rendered meaningful and take their place in the order of things only as they are operated on by Spirit or Form. Pure Form exists only in God. The sulphurous mass of Hell symbolizes our concept of brute matter. All existence can be understood only if regarded as a unity of matter and form. Development and evolution of things, though limited by their material substratum, are nevertheless possible as form and spirit transform them into higher and more meaningful phenomena. Man, too, though created by God, was made of dust. An integral part of the natural process, he possesses significance through the fusion of the spiritual and the material within his own being. Body and soul, mind and matter, coalesce to give him life and meaning. But man, despite his common bond with other objects in the order of nature, stands superior to them through his faculty of thought. He is unique in that he is a thinking, rational being. The play of spirit on matter in man is not a mechanical, unconscious process, but is guided and determined by man through his capacity for thought. The world, then, is viewed in its integration as an organic whole of matter and spirit. Man, though like nature in his coordination of form and substance, nevertheless rises above nature in his ability to control the working of spirit as it transforms brute, physical stuff into specific, living entities.

Moral values, it is true, have a real existence. They are the expression of the spiritual in human conduct and social relationships. Through their instrumentality man raises himself from the slough of purely physical existence and introduces into his life a richness and meaning without which it is base and formless. But ethical principles, as all other phenomena, must be united to a substantial basis. As ideals they manifest divinity. They are meaningless in terms of human existence unless they can be brought to earth. Justice, beauty, truth, righteousness, are not excretions of matter, vaporous emanations from purely physical substances. Their development, though to a degree conditioned, is not determined, by physical factors. But they achieve their highest form of reality when they are joined to a particular object or find expression in specific situations. They do not sit enshrined in their heavenly palaces and invite man to their ethereal domain. Man's humble abode serves as their habitation. Justice is a concept dangling in thin air unless it finds practical application in a throbbing society to the exigencies of daily life. Thus we find that the Torah never formulates an ideal without providing directions for its concretization. "Love thy neighbour as thyself" would be as unavailing as Hegel's "Recht" unless it were followed in the same chapter by the command to give part of our harvest to the poor. Jewish law throughout its history becomes not the statement of noble sentiments but instances of their daily application. The Jew, then, achieves the spiritual life not by lip-service to glorious ideals but by applying and joining the spiritual values of life to his material surroundings. A Jew who, though believing firmly in the absolutism of moral principles, fails in practice to unite them with his material environment, is as far from the Jewish conception of the good life as he who, floundering in the rut of his material existence, completely denies the existence of anything more than physical reality.

Man thus occupies a position of prime importance in the scheme of things. He serves as

the link between God and nature. He is the medium through which spirit is brought to bear on our material environment to tender the world a better place in which to live and human beings more worthy of association. God and nature are not two streams into either of which man must plunge. He is the bridge between both, through which the spirit of God passes into the physical world.

History, if we view it from the perspective of the Jewish mind, becomes neither the dialectic of ideas nor the description of the operation of physical laws. It is a drama in which man plays the leading role. It tells of his efforts to achieve the fusion of the spiritual and the material, of his struggle to impress his universal concepts on the process of nature. We can, in this fashion, regard history as beginning with the Revelation on Mount Sinai, for there man was first taught the principles of morality and commanded to apply them to life. Man, therefore, no longer becomes a helpless being in the face of inexorable forces that govern the universe, a pawn in the hands of a tyrannical fate. Rather, he can sit at the levers of society and, to a considerable degree, control its destinies. Man is possessed of initiative in the application of concepts to matter, and in the exercise of this initiative he determines history. The significance of this consideration of the universe as an "open one" is of profound importance, for it implies that man by his own actions can determine his future. Creation in nature symbolizes for the Jew this "openness" of the universe. It is a world in which sudden change and accidents become possible, rather than one whose movements are predestined in immutable form. The doctrine of repentance is a manifestation of the belief in Judaism that man can by his own efforts prevent his doom and shape his future. That this conception of Free Will in history formed a fundament of Jewish doctrine is evidenced most clearly by the Prophets. Their appeals for social justice, their insistence that men alter their evil ways and, by so doing, avert the catastrophic fate

that would inevitably be their lot, were inspired by this conviction that man can govern his destiny.

But Judaism always realized that man was made of the soil of the earth. He must be eternally bound by the limitations of his humble origin. Before he can aspire to become a worthy medium through which God's spirit operates on matter, his physical attributes and his material well-being must be considered. Man cannot escape from the confines to which his physical nature has limited him. The extent to which he can fulfil his mission of consciously bringing spirit to develop matter is determined by the degree of his physical well-being. The attainment of physical comfort must therefore be our first consideration. Thus the preservation of health and the maintenance of proper standards of physical purity are insisted upon throughout the Torah. The cultivation of a sound bodily state has always been emphasized by precept in Jewish law. But man is a social being. He can achieve happiness as well as find the opportunity for the development of an integrated personality only when he enters into a society of men. A major part of Jewish teaching, therefore, has as its direct concern the establishment of wholesome social and economic relationships among men. Man must first be planted firmly on the ground if he is to aspire to heaven. Man in Judaism does not fall from heaven to achieve his contact with the earth. Rather, he rises from the ground to celestial heights. Man is first created from dust; only later does he acquire a soul and an intellect. In this respect, the naturalism of Aristotle is in considerable consonance with Jewish thought.

The tirade of Jewish law and Jewish thinkers against asceticism can thus be very logically understood. For Judaism, we have seen, views neither nature spiritualistically nor spirit from the point of view of nature, but recognizes the fusion of

both elements in the world order. The world is neither wholly good nor wholly evil. Physical well-being is not rejected as in asceticism nor is it made the one end of life as in materialism. Jewish life is neither one of crass materialism nor one of fanatical spiritualism. It is essentially a harmonious blending of all aspects of life, of every phase of human activity. The ideal Jew is one in whom the utmost development of his every aspect is realized— one who can achieve a consonance of both spiritual and physical perfection. The Jew, therefore, while placing the ideal of other-worldliness before him as the consummation of spiritual perfection, must be fully cognizant of the reality of his existence in this world.

Thus, the synthesis that Aristotle later achieved for Greek speculation, Judaism has already realized in a practical doctrine of life. That the naturalism and matter and form of Aristotle run strikingly parallel to the Jewish conception, is clear, I feel, from a philosophic approach to the study of Judaism. And if the Stagyrte couched his theories in philosophical and analytical modes, Judaism expressed itself in precepts of practical observance. It is, therefore, by no means strange that Aristotle and Maimonides were so acceptable to the Jewish mind while men like Plato and Philo were rejected by the Jews and were a negligible influence in the development of Jewish thought. Neither could the creed of a Caesar or a Pompey ever determine Jewish practice.

The Greek could not survive on contemplation, suspended in mid-air like the Socrates of "The Clouds." Neither could the Roman march on with his legions forever, extending his dominion of might. Both were eliminated as participants in the play of history. The Jews, who learned the secret of supplementing theory with practice and of merging both into an integrated, harmonious way of living, are truly "The Eternal People."

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(Standing) William Kaufman, Leo J. Usdan, Herbert Koshat, Boris Rabinowitz, Isaiah Eisenberg, Seymour Kornfeld, Moses I. Feuerstein.

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Yeshiva College Student Council

1935

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What 1935 Has Done for Yeshiva College

by DAVID W. PETEGORSKY

President, Yeshiva College Student Council

The pages that follow tell a most eloquent tale of a mighty struggle. Every line recounts another success in our effort to introduce a more vigorous spirit among the students at Yeshiva College. The dream of a living, forceful student organization and of a variegated, successfully functioning program of extra-curricular activity has matured to a ripe and flourishing reality.

When the Student Council took office in the fall of 1934, its problem was of tremendous magnitude. Two or three student organizations, a library, an annual publication and one athletic team represented the sum total of its activities. Extra-curricular activity as a vital factor in the life of the student body was a non-existent entity. Service agencies were phenomena unknown within these walls. Few media were available to the students for the expression of their particular interests and talents. A most deplorable lack of concern with modern Jewish and social problems was far from being a credit to Yeshiva College. The student body as an articulate, organized force in the institution simply did not exist. A collection of classes in which students sometimes absorbed knowledge represented the totality of Yeshiva College.

The task of the Council was thus a Herculean one. The actualization of the plans it formulated was regarded by all but one or two of its most optimistic members as a fond but fantastic hope. None but the most obdurate cynic will deny that our accomplishments have exceeded the dreams of the most Utopian among us.

In adopting and executing its program the Council addressed itself to five major problems. It had to awaken the students to a realization of the problems existing both within the institution and in the world at large. To achieve this, it

was necessary to imbue the student body with a sense of organization, and to provide media for the frank and forceful expression of opinion. Organizations ministering to student interests had to be established and developed. Service agencies to bring to the students conveniences available at other institutions but lacking at Yeshiva were felt by the Council to be an integral part of any student organization. Competitive athletics as a means of providing much-needed physical relaxation and pleasurable exercise for the participation of the entire student body had always been a sorely-felt and neglected need. To remedy this particular situation was but another of the problems that cried for solution.

To these ends, the Council together with several school-spirited members of the student body devoted themselves whole-heartedly. The obstacles in its path seemed at first insurmountable. The lethargy and stupor of Yeshiva College students in affairs beyond the limits of the lecture room had become proverbial in the institution. The traditional failure of ideals to realize fruition in the college added to our many concrete handicaps a serious psychological one. The problem of time presented us our greatest difficulty. The negligible, oft times negative, interest manifested by the Administration in our work was hardly designed to further our program.

Against this background the Council worked. Through the untiring efforts of several students, it succeeded in generating a sincere enthusiasm in the college and in enlisting the cooperation of the entire student body in translating its ideals into reality.

A glance at the roster of student activities will reveal the fact that no fewer than six clubs, four

service projects, two new branches of athletics, a program of intramural sports, a bi-weekly publication, lecture forums and student assemblies were established this year in Yeshiva College. The reorganization of the International Relations Club, the Glee Club and the Debating Society enabled these groups to continue and expand their fine work of the previous year. A Loan Fund with its remarkable record of service to the student body and an Employment Committee through whose medium needy students received remunerative employment proved of inestimable convenience and aid. The patronage accorded the Concert Bureau in the first year of its existence speaks more eloquently than eulogies of its popularity. Reduction in prices of school and standard supplies were made available to the students through the medium of the Cooperative Store. By means of liberal appropriations, the Council made possible the continued growth and rapid expansion of the Student Library. The increased number of books and the opening of a reference room can be appreciated only by those of us who were handicapped in the early years of Yeshiva College by the lack of proper library accommodations. The Art Club, Dramatic Society, Ibn Ezra Mathematics Club and the Maimonides Health Club present the students with an opportunity to indulge in interesting yet instructive and creative extra-curricular work. Student forums brought to the college scholars of distinction and note. A conscious, active interest in current Jewish problems will undoubtedly be fostered by the most recently formed group, the Mizrahi Organization of Yeshiva College. The introduction of tennis and indoor baseball as major sports broadened our athletic activity so that a very large proportion of the school was included in its scope. The Varsity basketball team engaged in its first year of competition against leading intercollegiate and club teams of the metropolitan district. All classes entered with zeal and enthusiasm into the intramural competition in basketball and baseball. The Chess Club not only maintained its high standard in intercollegiate

competition but conducted as well a highly successful school tournament. Monthly assemblies served to integrate all these activities and to coordinate them into a working whole. The bi-weekly Commentator, the first issue of which appeared in February, provided the students with a concrete means of self-expression. Raising and crystallizing issues fundamental in their nature, the Commentator led the fight for reform and innovation in a manner hitherto impossible. It stands forth as the tower in the imposing edifice that will remain as a monument to the work of the 1935 Student Council.

That the initiation of such an extensive program of extra-curricular activity has effected a tremendous change in the attitude of the student toward his college is a fact evident to those who have observed the student body critically. The establishment within the college of almost every phase of student life found in other institutions dissipated the disparaging attitude with which students formerly regarded the college. A genuine eagerness and enthusiasm has superseded the former passivity. This new spirit can be viewed in its evolution when we realize that, while all work of the first term had to be initiated by the Council or its Extra-curricular Activities Committee, the developments of the second term were a spontaneous expression emanating from the student body. The wonted introversion of the Yeshiva student has been externalized by wholesome recreation and participation in manifold activities. An awakening interest in problems both within and without the institution has carried his interest far beyond mere book knowledge. The college in its totality is becoming to the student more than a mere aggregation of courses; it is assuming the shape of a living, organic whole. And if a spirit of criticism has of late manifested itself, it is precisely because of the fact that the college is becoming to mean something to its students. They are being drawn nearer to it and are becoming more anxious for its welfare. It is only because it is becoming part of their being that they watch

its progress zealously and strive through every means at their command to effect its improvement.

As one who has closely observed this development in the student body over a period of years and who has sought to translate this change into terms of the welfare of the college, I feel that it is not assuming too much to declare that the work of the 1935 Student Council has been the most powerful creative factor at work this year in assuring a bright future for Yeshiva College. That the annual questionnaire submitted to the senior class revealed almost unanimous agreement that the development of student activity constituted the greatest progress made by Yeshiva College in 1935, indicates that my assertion is more than mere fantasy.

What of the future? The coming year is bound to bring problems as pressing as were those of the past. If this year laid the foundation, next year must complete the structure. This year the task was one of establishment and expansion; next year it must be that of strengthening the existing organizations. The correlation of all activities into a many-sided, well-balanced program rather than the addition of new groups, is the major concern of succeeding student administrations.

Our intense preoccupation with the upbuilding of the Student Organization made it impossible for us to extend our scope of activity beyond the limits of the institution. Yeshiva College can—and should—play a leading role in current movements, particularly in the Jewish world. Affiliation with national Jewish and student groups would make possible a self-assertion of Yeshiva College in general and Jewish problems. It would enable the students to view with a broader perspective the problems confronting the world in general and Jewry and Judaism in particular.

Media for the discussion of current Jewish affairs are unfortunately lacking in the institution. It has already become evident that if the students seek such discussion, they must take the initiative in rendering it possible. To this end the student forums must be strengthened. No effort should

be spared in securing those qualified to speak with authority to lecture before the student body.

Though a small college, Yeshiva has not cultivated the advantages indigenous to such an institution. With one or two notable exceptions, little personal contact between instructor and student has been evidenced. A spirit of intimate relationship and conscious cooperation in the development of the college could be realized, I feel, through the medium of periodic meetings of the faculty and student body, smokers, informal conferences and permanent joint committees.

A deep conviction of what the students have already become aware is fundamental for the future. I refer to the strength and power inherent in a well-organized, assertive student body. A college exists neither for the aggrandizement of its administration nor for the purpose of providing employment for its faculty members. Its policies can be justified solely in terms of its students. An energetic student body alive to its needs and problems can do much in determining the practices of its school. But this power must never be abused. Its exercise is warranted only when prompted by sincere concern for the welfare of the institution and the well-being of its students.

In closing, I should like to add a note of warning. A grave danger exists in any process that the means may obscure the end—that values are often confused. Extra-curricular activity is a vital and most important factor in any institution of learning, particularly where academic preoccupation is of such an intense nature. It operates as a necessary condition in the development of a full personality. At best, however, it can serve as a supplement to organized study and education in its narrower connotation. The position of a student organization in the design of Yeshiva College must not be overemphasized. A just sense of values must be preserved. To strike a proper balance between formal study and extra-curricular activity must be the concern of our successors. We trust that they will be devoted and successful in discharging their duty to the college and its student body.



William Kaufman, Mordecai Gabriel, Moses I. Feuerstein, Seymour Kornfeld, Gershon Feigon.

THE COMMENTATOR

<i>Editor-in-Chief</i>	Moses I. Feuerstein
<i>Managing-Editor</i>	Mordecai Gabriel
<i>Sports Editor</i>	William Kaufman
<i>News Editor</i>	Gershon J. Feigon
<i>Business Editor</i>	Seymour Kornfeld

With the continued development of Yeshiva College and the phenomenal growth of student activities, it was merely a matter of time before a regular student publication would be woven into the pattern of Yeshiva student life. A few of the more interested students had toyed with the idea in recent years, but it was not till the spring of 1935 that their dream became a reality.

The Student Council, with the initiative that characterized its work throughout the year, appointed at one of its earliest meetings a Publication Committee, headed by Moses I. Feuerstein,

to investigate and to report on the possibility of financing the publication and on plans for its establishment. The Committee continued its work for several weeks, reporting its progress to Council at every meeting. The intervention of the winter examinations forced a temporary postponement but work was resumed immediately after the opening of the spring term. The plan of the committee called for a bi-weekly publication of four pages, the first issues to be financed by the Council. Advertising to be secured after one or two numbers had been issued was expected to pay for sub-

sequent editions. Detailed suggestions for the organization of the staff, the determination of editorial policy and other matters were embodied in the Committee's report which was adopted with modification by the Council. Moses I. Feuerstein was appointed Editor-in-Chief, with full authority to appoint his governing board and staffs.

On March 4th, the first number of the Commentator (the name suggested by Eli Levine, '32, a former editor of Hedenu), was distributed in the College. Few events have created as genuine enthusiasm within the institution as did the appearance of the first regular student newspaper. Four issues followed at the regular two-week interval, making a total of five issues in three months. Originally a four-page, four-column sheet, the Commentator expanded in its third issue to five columns. Local and national advertising helped to defray the expenses of publication. The continued improvement of each succeeding issue was decidedly noticeable as the students learned more of the art of journalism and as new talent was discovered and attracted from the student body. Columnists, sport writers, news reporters, and business experts were soon developed who were able to present a newspaper that could compare creditably, under the circumstances, with any college newspaper in the city.

That the Commentator filled with a vital need in student life at Yeshiva is evident from its immediate success. Reports of all school activities, announcement of coming events, and editorial comment served to integrate all student work into a unit and to crystallize student opinion on fundamental problems.

Its most important influence was exerted through the medium of its editorial page. In vigorous and forceful manner, the Commentator in its early editorials, called for the Yeshiva to assert itself

over the protest of certain Orthodox groups against participation in the Maimonides Octocentennial Celebration. The action of the Rabbinical Assembly of the Jewish Theological Seminary and the Central Conference of Reform Rabbis in endorsing the work of the Histadruth in Palestine was denounced in a series of editorials that condemned, as well, the inactivity of Orthodox Jewry in Zionist affairs while the anti-religious development of Palestine is continuing apace. It is interesting to observe that these editorials were quoted and commented upon in a considerable portion of the Jewish press. Several other editorials commented on general student problems in the country at large.

The most vital influence, however, was felt as the Commentator launched a series of editorials demanding a greater Judaization of the college; a greater emphasis on Jewish studies, the integration of courses in Jewish literature, Jewish history, Jewish philosophy, and modern Jewish problems into the curriculum; reorganization of the Hebrew department of the Yeshiva, and the postponement of the opening of the School of Business Administration as premature until more vital needs are filled. The campaign of the Commentator roused the student body to the realization of the grave problems confronting the institution today.

The Commentator has undoubtedly been the outstanding achievement of the Student Council this year. The efforts of its governing board and staff together with the encouraging support of the student body have made possible its rapid advance to the fore as the agent for molding and expressing student opinion. It has facilitated the growth of a new spirit of solidarity and cooperation in the institution. Next year will surely witness the establishment of the Commentator as the most vital and beneficial influence in Yeshiva College.



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(Seated) Wolfe Charney, Arthur Rosenbaum, Asher Block, Boris Rabinowitz.

(Standing) Simon Noveck, Theodore Adams, Joseph Jaffe, Samuel H. Prero, Sidney Kleiman.

DEBATING SOCIETY

President—ASHER BLOCK

The debating season opened early in November with unparalleled enthusiasm. A reorganization meeting of the Debating Society was held, at which the number of those eager to try for the team was beyond all precedent and expectation. Under the direction of Dr. Damon, head of the Public Speaking Department, trials were conducted and a squad was selected.

The first encounter, with Brooklyn College, was an extremely significant one, since the teams of both institutions had proved themselves invincible over a number of years. The meeting in Yeshiva auditorium aroused much interest and was very well attended. The chairman of the evening, the

Honorable Nathan D. Perlman, former United States Congressman, and active in Jewish circles, was introduced by the President of the Student Council, Mr. Petegorsky. The subject for debate was: "Resolved, that the private manufacture of arms and munitions be prohibited by international agreement," with Yeshiva upholding the affirmative and Brooklyn defending the negative. The Yeshiva team consisted of Arthur Rosenbaum, Simon Noveck, and Theodore Adams.

Shortly thereafter, a second debate was held with the representatives of New York State College for Teachers, of Albany. The Yeshiva second team, consisting of Boris Rabinowitz, Sidney

Kleiman, and Wolfe Charney, met the Albanians in the Social Hall of the Dormitory. Asher Block, president of the Debating Society, presided at this debate. Yeshiva maintained the negative of the subject: "Resolved, that the government control the manufacture, sale, and exportation of munitions in the United States." Both this and the preceding debate were of the non-decision type.

The interest in debating, aroused and increased by the activities of the fall term, was surpassed by the genuine enthusiasm with which the spring trials were attended. Because of the number of excellent and eager debaters, three teams were selected. The first was composed of Arthur Rosenbaum, Asher Block, Boris Rabinowitz, and Joseph Jaffe. The second team consisted of Samuel Prero,

Simon Noveck, and Sidney Kleiman. The third was a freshman team and included Laster, Margolis, and Bialick.

The highlight of the debating activity of the spring term was the success of Yeshiva's first radio debate. Challenged by the College of the City of New York, Yeshiva went on the air for the first time, represented by Arthur Rosenbaum and Asher Block. An interesting feature of the debate was the fact that City College was represented by two former Yeshiva men—Reuben E. Gross and Pincus Chazin. The debate was held in the studios of W-B-N-X and proved an auspicious debut for Yeshiva College as a voice of the air.

MAIMONIDES HEALTH CLUB

Chairman—MORRIS ZELMAN

The Maimonides Health Club was organized in April, 1935, under the aegis of Dr. David Swick, Director of the Medical Staff at Yeshiva College, assisted by Dr. Richter, a member of the staff and one of the outstanding physicians in New York City. The enthusiasm with which the group was greeted and the response which it elicited from the student body were highly encouraging, and speak well for its future standing as a skillful and efficient service group.

At the opening meeting it was pointed out by Dr. Swick how crying was the need for a student medical organization capable of handling emergency situations and of caring efficiently for the sick in the dormitory. It would serve as well to disseminate a knowledge of the principles of pathology, and to promote as far as possible a generally healthful balance of body and mind. Subsequently, the advance which the Health Service had made during the past several years was traced, and plans were outlined for future activities. The Health Club will be trained in the application of first aid, will hear a series of lectures by eminent authorities on pertinent medical topics, such as physical and mental hygiene,

and will punctuate its regular meetings with field trips to hospitals and clinics, combining observation and active participation in hospital work.

The third meeting, which was attended by more than thirty interested students, was addressed by Dr. Richter, and then heard a series of lectures on the achievements of Maimonides as a physician, in recognition of which the group chose its name. Discussion followed the cultural part of the meeting, after which election of officers took place. Morris Zelman was chosen chairman for the coming year, and Samuel H. Prero was elected secretary.

Dr. Tittler, chairman of the Biology Department, presented an interesting lecture on "The Tropical Diseases of Man" at the final meeting of the organization. His talk was illustrated with slides, contributing illuminating sidelights to the discussion, and was attended by sixty members and visitors. Before closing, a planning committee, composed of Hyman Aronoff, Samuel Prero, and Morris Zelman, was chosen to arrange an integrated program of activity for the coming year, and it promises a more active and vital organization than has yet been developed.

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(Kneeling) Elihu Kasten, Max Levy, Joseph Goodman, Morris Krieger, Julius Mager, Herbert Koshar.

(Standing) William Kaufman, Marvin Hurewitz, Louis Muss, Hyman Aranoff, Norman Goldklang, Av Greenberg, Isarah Eisenberg, Moses I. Feuerstein, Erwin Zolt.

VARSITY BASKETBALL

*Captain—*JOE GOODMAN

This year marked the first season of intercollegiate competition for the Yeshiva College Varsity Basketball team. Handicapped by the lack of a coach and proper training facilities, the team, nevertheless, made a very creditable showing in its lengthy schedule and evoked much favorable comment and publicity in local athletic circles. Its opponents included such teams as the Junior Varsities of Long Island University, City College and St. Johns University, City College Evening Session, N. Y. U. Law School, N. Y. U. School of Physical Education, Manhattan College Freshman, Jersey City Normal, Drake College, Wee-

hawken Sports Club, and other collegiate and club teams of the metropolitan area.

Playing before the largest crowd ever to witness a basketball game in Yeshiva College, the Varsity engaged the veteran Long Island J. V. in its opening game. Although it lost a thrilling game by a field goal scored in the final seconds of play, the team gave promise of developing into a highly polished and efficient unit. Successive defeats at the hands of the City College and St. Johns J. V.'s failed to dampen the zeal of the players or the enthusiasm of their supporters. Ending the first half of its schedule with an un-

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imposing record, the team showed decided improvement over its earlier play.

Assiduous practice brought successful results in the form of well-earned victories during the second half of the season. Opening with a decisive victory over Drake College of Bayonne, the Varsity ran up a string of victories and concluded the latter part of the schedule with but two defeats. Yeshiva counted among its victims such outstanding teams as City College Evening Session, N. Y. U. Law School, and Schiff Center Juniors, thereby avenging crushing defeats suffered at the hands of these teams in previous years.

The play of the team as it closed the schedule was of a really high standard. The fact that the team loses but one of its members through gradu-

ation assures it an even more successful season next year. Additional strength is expected from the newcomers to college next term.

The enthusiastic support of the student body did much to encourage the team in its efforts. All home games were witnessed by crowds that filled the gymnasium to capacity.

Outstanding on the team were Joe Goodman, the tricky captain; Mager, the diminutive but effective guard; Levy, the flashy high scorer; Aronoff, the steady and consistent forward, and Muss, the dependable center. The members of the Varsity included Goodman (captain), Muss, Greenberg, Eisenberg, Goldklang, Koshar, Krieger, Aronoff, Mager, Levy, and Kasten. Assisting in the business end were Moe Feuerstein and Marvin Hurewitz.

INTRAMURAL BASKETBALL

Director—LOUIS MUSS

After several years of uniformly unsuccessful attempts, intramural basketball was established this year as a major athletic activity. From the beginning all classes cooperated with Louis Muss in the preparation of a program of games. Despite many late classes every team succeeded in completing its schedule of six games. The Sophomore team was clearly the outstanding one. Under the leadership of Captain Irving Mensch, high scorer of the league, the second year men swept through the season undefeated. The other members of the winning team were Rosenman, Charney, Drusin, Werfel, Levitan, Stern, J. Gordon and Ribner.

INTRAMURAL SOFTBALL

Encouraged by the success of the intramural basketball tournament, the Student Council entered upon a similar venture during the spring term. A series of softball games was scheduled among the various classes, in which a large majority of the student body could participate. Conducted after classes in the evening and on Lag B'omer, these games proved highly popular. The fact that but a minimum of skill was necessary and the absence of the requirement of strenuous activity attendant upon baseball, helped to attract many who otherwise would have had little or no outdoor exercise and recreation. The Sophomores and the Juniors entered the strongest teams. As we go to press these teams are tied for first place and a game has been arranged for a playoff.

STUDENT ASSEMBLIES

To aid in integrating all student activities, to place before the student body a record of its accomplishments, and to discuss its plans for the future with the entire membership of the Student Organization, the Student Council established monthly assemblies as an integral part of its program. Several assemblies were held during the

first term at which representatives of the Student Council addressed the students. The publication of the *Commentator* during the second term, however, obviated to some degree the need for such general meetings and proved more efficient than assemblies in effecting the purpose for which the latter was instituted.



(Kneeling) Seymour Kornfeld, Joseph Goodman, Jerome Gordon.

(Standing) Harold Rosenman, Av Greenberg, Louis Muss, Lawrence Charney, Wolfe Charney, Boris Rabinowitz, Irving Mensch.

TENNIS TEAM

Captain—JERRY GORDON

Athletics in 1935 saw the addition of tennis to the list of recognized extra-curricular activities at the college. Tennis has been among the most popular of summer sports, rivalling even baseball in its popularity and universal appeal, and this year, with the elimination of baseball as a varsity activity, tennis rose to the status of the official summer pastime.

The Athletic Council was very fortunate in securing the services of Ed Philips, who is well known in competitive circles as an outstanding tournament player, as coach of the squad. Coach Philips immediately inaugurated the season and practice sessions were being held indoors as early

as the latter part of March, with a considerable group of hopefuls in constant attendance.

From these emerged a squad of eight, which included Jerry Gordon, Joe Goodman, Lou Muss, Av Greenberg, Wolfe Charney, Seymour Kornfeld, Lawrence Charney, and Boris Rabinowitz. Drilling in fundamentals, stroking and strategy was intensive, and a team of polished and expert players, capable of holding their own against most of the schools in the city, was developed by the beginning of May.

It is to be regretted that a schedule of matches had not been drawn up, impossible though it was to have foreseen the development of this new

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major sport. Unable to engage in intercollegiate matches, a number of encounters were arranged with Tennis Clubs at the Bennett Courts, in which the Yeshiva squad won its spurs.

Yeshiva has emerged with victory in almost all

its matches, proving its ability and competitive spirit. At this writing, a schedule of meetings with metropolitan colleges is being drawn up for the coming season, when Yeshiva will step out for the first time in intercollegiate tennis competition.

DRAMATIC GUILD

President—BORIS RABINOWITZ

In line with its general policy of encouraging active participation of all students in extra-curricular activities, the Student Council this year authorized the organization of the Dramatic Guild. The need for an outlet for self-expression had long been felt, and it is this which the Guild has provided. Aside from the production of plays, the Guild will make a study of the drama of all ages, with particular emphasis upon its modern phases and on contemporary playwrights.

The Guild was unable, because of lack of time, to carry out its program of activities fully. Two plays were cast, "The Valiant" and "In the Zone," and were prepared for production when examinations forced a halt. As a result, production has

been postponed till autumn, when the plays will be presented before the entire student body.

Dr. Damon, chairman of the Public Speaking Department, who has a great deal of experience in dramatics and with amateur theatre groups, lectured informally at meetings on various phases of the drama and dramatic technique. He supervised casting and production, and coached the players in rehearsal.

The leading members of the group are Boris Rabinowitz, Seymour Kornfeld, and Wolfe Charney, who were chosen president, vice-president, and secretary respectively. Much interest has been stimulated by the work of the Guild and a busy and highly successful season is promised for the coming year.

MIZRACHI YOUTH OF YESHIVA COLLEGE

President.....Bernard Lander

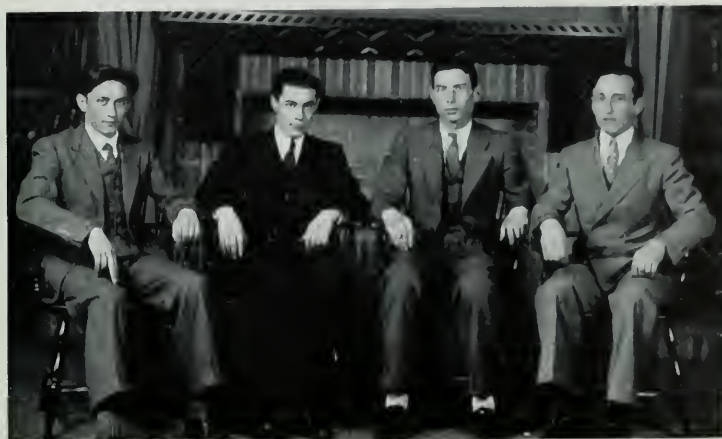
Vice-President.....Eleazer Goldman

Secretary.....Louis Werfel

The awakening interest of the student body in current Jewish affairs and particularly in Zionist problems was manifested by the organization late in the spring term of the Mizrahi Youth of Yeshiva College. Dedicated to the study of the various phases and parties of Zionism and more particularly to the propagation of the ideals of the Poel Hamizrachi, the new group is expected to foster active participation of Yeshiva College students in the work of rebuilding Eretz Israel in the spirit of traditional Judaism and in militant protest against the present anti-religious development of the Holy Land. The club plans to achieve

these ends through the medium of lectures, forums, and social and cultural meetings, as well as by active cooperation with the work and program of the National Organization.

The organization meeting, attended by a large and enthusiastic audience, was addressed by David W. Petegorsky, President of the Student Council of Yeshiva College, who discussed "Mizrachism—its Theory and Practice." A subsequent meeting heard Rabbi Seymour Zambrowsky, Executive Director of the Mizrahi Youth of America, dwell on the immediate problems confronting Mizrahi throughout the world.



George Silver, Emanuel R. Zapinsky, Israel Mowshowitz, Morris Poupko.

CHESS TEAM

Captain—ISRAEL MOWSHOWITZ

The Yeshiva College Chess Team of 1935 upheld the high standard of Yeshiva chess teams of former years. Although the team had lost the services of some of its best men through graduation, a well trained squad was organized around the nucleus of the veterans of last year, A. Polachek and I. Mowshowitz. Yeshiva entered a strong team in the Eastern Intercollegiate Chess Tournament, finishing fourth, ahead of such teams as Brooklyn, Pennsylvania, Seth Low, and St. Johns. These results are even more striking when we bear in mind the fact that, due to the illness of one of its players, Yeshiva was compelled to forfeit a board in every match.

In one of the most unique matches in the annals of intercollegiate chess, Yeshiva defeated Harvard in a correspondence meet. The match

which was begun in June, 1934, continued throughout the summer and fall and was completed only recently. The final score was $2\frac{1}{2}-1\frac{1}{2}$. One of the most interesting features of the matches was the game between A. Polachek and S. S. Coggan, which was conducted by the latter from Spain while vacationing there during the summer. This is probably the first time that a match of this type was successfully conducted in intercollegiate circles.

The Yeshiva College Chess Club Tournament was opened to all students of the college this spring. It is at present in the final rounds and is expected to reveal and develop players capable of carrying the name of Yeshiva College in intercollegiate competition next year.



(Seated) Morris Zelman, Lester Silverman, Robert Marmorstein, Solomon Lieber, Irving Mensch, Marvin Elefant, Jerome Gordon, Samuel Adelman, Harold Schachter.

(Standing) Abraham Shoulson, Seymour Kornfeld, Mordecai Gabriel, Sol Deutsch, Arthur Rosenbaum, David Gordon, Louis Satlow, Albert Brandes, Samuel Krischewsky, Herbert Hurwitz.

ART CLUB

<i>President</i>	Irving Mensch
<i>Vice-President</i>	Solomon Lieber
<i>Secretary</i>	Louis Mantel

An Art Club was formed this year by those students of the college who were interested in the cultivation and development of their art appreciation and abilities. Many members were quickly attracted to this cultural group and entered into active participation. Some of the advanced students assisted the novices and lectured on various aspects of art. Solomon Lieber lectured on cartooning and caricaturing. An instructive course in commercial and Hebrew lettering was conducted by Irving Mensch. Under his leadership

the Art Club provided the college with all the posters that were needed for scholastic and extra-curricular announcements. Another student lecture was delivered by David Gordon on the subject of "Art in Business Advertising."

The activities of the group did much to foster a greater appreciation of, and interest in, all phases of art. Expansion of the club to include lectures by outstanding artists, is planned for the coming year.

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS CLUB

President Simon Noveck

Vice-President Eleazer Goldman

Secretary Nathan Levenson

Terminating its second year of active work and continuing to carry out its original aim of stimulating greater interest and study in current international problems, the International Relations Club has during the past year established itself as an integral factor in extra-curricular activity at Yeshiva College. The club continued under the inspiring guidance of Dr. Margalith, who again served as faculty adviser. It has succeeded in arousing interest among the student body in international affairs by means of lectures by various guest speakers, round-table discussions, distribution of important periodicals, summaries of international news, and by the books which it has succeeded in securing through the Carnegie Endowment.

The group has successfully presented for its members and for the student body generally a number of prominent men, authorities on various phases of international affairs, whose lectures added greatly to the interest and value of the meetings.

At the opening of the year Dr. Margalith read a paper on "The Legal Status of the Jew in International Law," which made clear the position of the Jew in the countries of the world as viewed from a purely legal standpoint and discussed the advisability of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine as a means of bringing about universal recognition of the Jewish nation.

At a subsequent meeting Dr. Ernest Falschenfeld, former lecturer at Harvard University and an authority on the knotty refugee problem, spoke on "The Saar Problem," drawing, in the course of his discussion, a parallel between Germany of the pre-Hitler period and the America of today. Dr. Falschenfeld urged the Jews of the United States to protect themselves against a recurrence

of the German catastrophe by strengthening their Jewish life and institutions, by presenting a solid front against any sudden flare-up of anti-Semitic feeling.

At the request of the members, Dr. Mordecai Grossman, editor of "Social Frontiers," addressed the club for the second time in as many years on the changing social system. He predicted as inevitable a form of cooperative collectivist society in which Jews as a religious body may or may not find a place. The lecture resulted in much comment and a lengthy and heated discussion.

Dr. Nathan Reich, one of the editors of "Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences," spoke before a considerable group on "The Decline of Jewish Influence in Poland." Dr. Reich presented Palestinian colonization as the only solution for a people suffering from such terrible and yet inescapable persecution and poverty.

Terminating the pre-Passover lecturers, Ursula P. Hubbard, assistant director of International Relations Clubs at the Carnegie Endowment, addressed an unusually large gathering on the work of the Carnegie Endowment, and particularly of the International Relations Clubs, to further world peace. Miss Hubbard outlined the various activities of the five hundred thirty-seven clubs in the U. S. and of the several hundred clubs in foreign lands (including one in Jerusalem).

At the last meeting of the year which was held on May 27, Dr. H. L. Gordon, who has recently returned from Rome, spoke on "Mussolini and his Italy."

The wealth of first-hand information acquired by Dr. Gordon during his years of study and travel in Italy and his personal contact with many of the outstanding statesmen and personalities of Fascist

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Italy enthralled the audience and served as a most fitting climax to a highly successful season.

Aside from such periodicals as "A Fortnightly Summary of International Events," "Chronicle of World Affairs," and "Geneva," the club received as an addition to its library twelve recently published books on current political and economic questions, and numerous pamphlets published by The Foreign Policy Association. All these have been made accessible to the student body by the

International Relations Club through the college library.

The members of the International Relations Club have shown themselves during the past year to be cognizant of and actively interested in pressing international problems. Discussions and talks have shown the group genuinely disposed to live up to the aims it set for itself in its constitution.



STUDENT FORUMS

The student forums were conceived as a means of bringing before the student body prominent figures in the public and academic world to lecture on various aspects of general and Jewish life and culture. The difficulty of securing those outstanding in their respective fields and the pre-occupation of the students with other phases of extra-curricular work rendered impossible the establishment of the forums on as wide and extensive a scale as had been originally planned. The efforts of the Student Council and the cooperation of the administration during the spring term were instrumental in arranging a series of lectures in commemoration of the 800th anniversary of the birth of Maimonides. At this date, four of the series have already been completed.

Dr. Alexander Litman, in opening the series, discussed "Maimonides as the Redeemer of Man." That Maimonides redeemed man by integrating him in the universe and by restoring to him the dignity of which he had been shorn by the post-Aristotelian philosophers was ably demonstrated by Dr. Litman before the enthusiastic audience that gathered for his lecture.

The second talk was delivered by Harry A. Wolfson, Professor of Jewish Philosophy at Harvard University and one of the world's foremost authorities on mediaeval and Jewish philosophy.

In an address featured by his scholarship and vast erudition, Professor Wolfson clarified in considerable detail several aspects of Maimonides' philosophical works that have occasioned much controversy among his commentators. Professor Wolfson's discourse was of decided interest to the students as he brought to bear on the philosophical writings of Maimonides the approach usually associated with his Halachic works.

"Some Fundamental Principles of Maimonides' Halacha" was discussed by Dr. Bernard Revel, President of Yeshiva College, in the third lecture of the series. Dr. Revel in the course of his speech advanced an interpretation of the "Divre Sopherim" in Maimonides that differed fundamentally from that usually adopted by the interpreters of Maimonides.

Dr. David I. Macht, lecturer at Yeshiva College and eminent scientist and physician, spoke on the scientific and medical works of Maimonides in the concluding lecture.

That the student forum can be developed to fill a sorely-felt need in Yeshiva College has become evident in the few months of its existence. A concentration of effort in the future in expanding and strengthening this phase of extra-curricular activity will assuredly bear fruit in a more vital and active interest of the students in the broadening of their cultural perspective.

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(Seated) Elihu Kasten, Erwin Zolt, Isaiah Eisenberg, David W. Petegorsky, Louis Leifer, Aaron Waldman, Sidney Kleiman.

(Standing) David Goldwasser, Robert Marmorstein, Philip Mehler, Leonard Waldman, Irving Mensch, Av Greenberg, Hyman Aranoff, Herbert Koshar, Herbert Hurwitz.

SERVICE GROUPS

CONCERT BUREAU

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

COOPERATIVE STORE

LIBRARY

EMPLOYMENT BUREAU

LOAN FUND



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YESHIVA COLLEGE STUDENT LIBRARY

Chief Librarian—LEO J. USDAN

The valuable and efficient work done by the student library during its formative stage of the last few years bore magnificent fruit this year. The library grew so rapidly that it was necessary to transfer it to larger and more spacious quarters. Moreover, a reading and reference room to facilitate study and research was opened this year. At present the library is open from 2 P. M. until 6 P. M. Plans are under way, however, for further expansion and for even greater conveniences for the student body. The library will be open all day with a librarian in charge at all times.

There are no additional library fees and the books are easily and directly accessible to all students. Increased interest in the library facilities on the part of the student body and the augmentation of the number of volumes through purchase and through numerous gifts from people devoted to the ideals of Yeshiva College have served to make the library a real aid to both students and faculty. The records of this semester reveal that circulation figures have risen to three times those of last year.

Among the largest contributions were those made by members of the faculty. Dr. Leo Jung, who

has been a constant donor of books to the student library, continued his fine work and added many valuable works to his already large total. Dr. Liptzin, of the German Department, presented the library with a valuable collection of books on German subjects, both in German and in English, including some of his own works. Dr. Rhodes donated many sets of French books, which have become invaluable to the French classes. The mathematics section was increased by the fine volumes in that field contributed by Professor Jekuthiel Ginsburg. A donation of a library in memory of their deceased son was received from Mr. and Mrs. Weber. Including the many necessary volumes purchased by means of the generous appropriations of the Student Council, about 2500 books were added during the past year to the rapidly growing total.

The good work and encouraging results of the library are due almost entirely to the efficient and sincere efforts of the student staff. Leo Usdan continued in his position as chief librarian; the rest of the staff was reorganized and expanded. The following have ably assisted Mr. Usdan in his work: Elihu Kasten, Herbert Hurwitz, Robert Marmorstein, Leonard Waldman, and Herbert Koshat.

EMPLOYMENT BUREAU

Chairman—AARON WALDMAN

The Yeshiva College Employment Bureau was founded by the 1935 Student Council in order to supply the student body with those facilities for obtaining remunerative activity that are offered by other colleges. The committee that was selected to conduct the bureau consisted of Aaron Waldman, Samuel Hoch, and Sidney Kleiman. Regular student applications were organized and positions

were solicited through advertising media and through the student body. In its first year of activity the Employment Bureau proved of inestimable value and assistance to many students in need of positions. Overcoming various natural obstacles inherent in an undertaking of this kind, the committee was able to secure temporary and permanent jobs for a number of students as tutors

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and lecturers. Needy Yeshiva College students were placed as counselors, supervisors, and rabbis in Jewish summer camps.

In the light of its undoubted achievement and in view of its unlimited potentiality as a valuable

aid to the students, the Employment Bureau has firmly established itself as an important instrument of service to the school. Next year will no doubt see the expansion and consolidation of this most vital agency, accompanied by an increase in its value and benefit to those it serves.

STUDENT LOAN FUND

Chairman—LOUIS LEIFER

One of the most important points in the program of the Student Council this year was the establishment of a Student Loan Fund. Hitherto, there had been no facilities available to students who needed to borrow money for a short time. At its very first meeting the Council appropriated a sum of money to be set aside as the Yeshiva College Student Loan Fund. To control this fund and to regulate applications and payments, Louis Leifer was selected chairman and Hyman Aronoff and Herbert Koshar were appointed to assist him.

The tremendous popularity and success of this

undertaking far exceeded any hopes of its founders. A total of over two hundred and fifty loans were made in its first year of operation. It is gratifying, moreover, that all these loans were repaid without any loss to the Fund.

Several generous donations to the Fund have already been received from people devoted to the aims and students of Yeshiva College. It is expected that the capital of the fund will be considerably increased next year by further contributions, thus enabling it to continue and expand its fine work of this year.

STUDENT COOPERATIVE STORE

ERWIN ZOLT *Managers* ISAIAH EISENBERG

Another service agency was added to the already imposing list when the Student Council organized the Student Cooperative Store in the beginning of the spring term. Designed to bring to the student body the advantages of service and price reduction, the Coop Store has functioned very successfully since its inception. Its location in the college building was a further convenience in that students could purchase their school supplies with little difficulty. The brisk business that the store conducted induced its management to extend its service beyond school needs. Contact with all publishing houses and leading book-sellers in the country made possible substantial reductions in books purchased by the students. Similar arrangements with other firms brought the

benefit of lower prices on athletic material to the college. Toward the end of the term material refreshments for the resuscitation of those students who found themselves exhausted by the strain of their studies could be purchased at the store. The coop also served a most useful function as the circulation office of the Commentator.

The store was financed by the Student Council. Despite its low-price policy, the management soon realized the initial outlay and is expected to end the year with a considerable surplus. Next year the store plans to add a book department to aid the students in buying and disposing of textbooks. Yeshiva College stationery, postal cards, banners, and posters will be offered for sale through its medium.

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CONCERT BUREAU

*Chairman—*AV GREENBERG

The newly organized College Concert Bureau has turned out to be one of the most important and successful of the student services established this year.

In recognition of the need for a strong influence toward the fullest and broadest cultural development of the student personality, the Concert Bureau was organized to point out the road to culture. The Bureau was designed to foster an interest in, and to encourage an appreciation of, music and the drama, and the cultivation of their associated arts; and looking back upon the eight months of its operation it is strikingly obvious that a marked change has resulted in the tenor of student thought along these lines.

Two fundamental impulses were necessary, both of which the Concert Bureau supplied. The first was an inculcation of an awareness of the treasures which music and drama hold in store for the concert and playgoer. Posters and handbills

distributed plentifully through the school testified to the energy with which the Bureau's staff applied itself in this direction. The second was the offering of exceedingly attractive admission prices, at considerable reductions from current box-office rates, which the Concert Bureau was able to secure through its connections with producers and with professional concert agencies. The motivation which was supplied by these two factors was more than sufficient to start a definite movement toward the concert hall and the theatre, and the cultural level of the student body has seen a steady rise.

Opera, plays, and concerts have regularly been listed on the Concert Bureau's boards. Discounts have been secured for many foreign film presentations, and reduced rates for several of the best swimming pools in the city.

Philip Mehler, Irving Mensch, and David Goldwasser constituted the staff of the Concert Bureau during the past year.

IBN EZRA MATHEMATICS CLUB

President Meyer Karlin
Vice-President Isidore Marine
Secretary Samuel H. Prero

There have always been students at Yeshiva College who have been interested in mathematics and who have pursued their research in that field far beyond the courses of study as presented in the classroom. This semester, however, marked the first attempt of an organized group to utilize mathematics in its varied phases as a mode of expression of extra-curricular activity. Under the able leadership of Professor Jekuthiel Ginsburg, head of the Department of Mathematics at Yeshiva and editor of the internationally recognized "Scripta Mathematica," an organization was formed by a considerable group of mathematics-

minded students. The name of the club, "Ibn Ezra Mathematics Club," is indicative of the aims of its founders. The members intend to pursue their study of mathematics unhampered by the rigid confinements of a syllabus and especially to study and to appraise the value of the contributions of Jewish scholars in the history of mathematics.

A program was formulated for the entire semester. At each meeting one of the members delivered a lecture on some particularized aspect of mathematics, followed by open discussion. Usually Professor Ginsburg added to the interest and scholarship of these discussions by his authori-

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tative comments. The breadth and profundity of his knowledge of the history of mathematics and of the medieval Jewish mathematicians proved an inspiration to the entire gathering. Despite the attraction of other extra-curricular activities and despite the lateness of the date when the club was organized, the group succeeded in conducting four student lectures. Meyer Karlin, president, opened the series with an interesting talk on "Systems of Notations." Eleazer Goldman, the second lecturer, spoke on "Factoring." A joint lecture by

Mr. Margolis and Mr. Karlin on "Exponential Series" concluded the activities of the year. The diligence and effort with which the lectures were prepared and the enthusiasm and intelligent discussion with which they were received insure a bright success for the coming year. It has been definitely planned, moreover, that next year the activities of the club will be expanded to include cooperation with similar organizations in the metropolitan area and in the various eastern colleges and universities.



GLEE CLUB

<i>President</i>	Theodore Adams
<i>Vice-President</i>	Seymour Krutman
<i>Secretary</i>	Isidore Magarik

With the beginning of the fall semester last September, the Yeshiva College Glee Club underwent a complete reorganization. For the first time in its history it was expanded to include the growing needs and demands of those students of the Yeshiva who do not attend Yeshiva College, and the students of Talmudical Academy.

The Glee Club was most fortunate in securing the services of Dr. Sholom Ahrony, of Chicago, well known composer of Jewish secular and liturgical music. Under his expert guidance training classes and rehearsals were conducted regularly. So enthusiastic were the members in their undertaking that they could often be found still singing at eleven and twelve o'clock in the evening. The combination of devoted effort on the part of Dr. Ahrony and the whole-hearted cooperation of the members of the club served to produce a well trained chorus of forty.

The two public appearances of the chorus were met with generous and genuine appreciation and

praise. At the Chanukah concert last semester and again at the Chag Hasmicha this spring the full chorus added greatly to the musical entertainment. Among the selections rendered were such difficult ones as S'eu Sh'eorim and Shuva Hashem, the latter an original composition of Dr. Ahrony.

The aim of the club is to instill in its members a love and appreciation of good choral music. Actual singing, moreover, not only enabled the students to acquire a first-hand and intimate acquaintance with the best musical literature, but it also served in no mean degree to reveal individual voices and train them in solos and harmony.

Music, as an integral and essential factor in the development of a full personality, has long been sadly neglected in Yeshiva College. The notable progress and improvement of the Glee Club over the musical activities of last year augurs well for its continued development next year with broadened facilities and increased student interest.

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ALUMNI

<i>President</i>	Louis Engelberg
<i>Vice-President</i>	Rabbi Mendel Lewittes
<i>Secretary</i>	Israel E. Friedman

Refreshed and invigorated by the class of '34, the Alumni Association began the school year by carrying on a vigorous campaign to spread the name and purpose of Yeshiva College. A special Saturday, known as Yeshiva College Shabbos, was set aside by the Young Israel, at which time every pulpit of this organization was occupied by a speaker from the alumni. That our younger generation is sincerely devoted to the ideals of our alma mater was well attested to by their insatiable desire for more knowledge about our institution.

Feeling that a more concrete testimonial of our loyalty would be highly appreciated, however, the organization sponsored a theatre party on March 7, and the huge turnout to the performance of "Awake and Sing" assures the college of a substantial donation from the Alumni Treasury. Whether this grant will assume the shape of a scholarship or a lectureship is to be decided at the final session.

The main feature of this last meeting will be the induction of the new graduates at the usual stag dinner. Oratory is limited to five minutes, election to ten minutes, and the rest of the time will be devoted to the business of the day—food. That we can boast of a seventy-five percent turnout speaks well of a harmony and good fellowship existing "amongst the boys."

* * *

Hats on the scholarship winners: Hyman Muss, Columbia Law School; Abe Guterman, Harvard Law School, and Hyman Israel, Psychology Department of Brown University. What other alumni can point to six percent of its organization as holders of graduate awards?

* * *

The rabbinate still attracts the largest number of our graduates. Our Southern delegation con-

sists of Julius Washer in Miami, Sid Nissenbaum (D.F.) of Macon, and Jacob Agushewitz of Norfolk. Hugo Mantel writes us from Dubuque that alumni dues will be paid after his first raise in salary—good old Hugo, always the optimist. With Aaron in Albany and brother Chaim in Chelsea, the Goldin twins are finding it a bit difficult to pat each other on the back. Max Hirschman has changed his place of studying Yore Deah from Professor Horne's English class to Troy, N. Y. Mendel Lewittes is attacking the problem of inter-marriage among the Jews of Easton from a non-sectarian viewpoint.

* * *

The present-day evolution from speaker to professor, from rabbi to Talmud Torah Teacher, necessitates special attention for the "kawmetz-aleph" boys: Joseph Kaminetsky is doing fine work at the Jewish Center Hebrew School; Maxwell Hoch, who squeezes a buffalo so hard that it becomes a camel, is now sole owner of a Talmud Torah in the Bronx; and Norman Siegel is telling the children of the Bronx the story about the "centzy, weentzy spider."

* * *

But there are quite a few who are studying Yore Deah and wishing that the Jews were vegetarians. Rabbi Morris Funk is recuperating from his final exam, and the doctor claims that he suffers from hallucinations. Only the other night he dreamt of a fat, healthy cow of the Pharaoh type grazing peacefully in the meadow. There enters a mean, little needle into the animal's mouth, stealthily slides down her trachea only to get stuck in the confines of the "Vaishet." The doctor is still puzzled at the desperate look in Moishe's face as he yelled "Traife! Traife!" Harry Steinberg has just found out that vest-pocket dictionaries and "B'eur Haitaves" are just a bit outmoded.

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Israel Upbin is wondering whether his twentieth year at the Yeshiva will be the lucky one. Lou Engelberg is trying to find out why the Jews demanded meat in the desert. Imagine—no Shechitah, no Trefos, no Melichah, no Taruvos, and no Basar Bechulav—if only our parents hadn't been members of the "Fat Men's League," (Hi, there, Fetchie!). Artie Decter and Father Coughlin are running in close competition as to who can say least in the most words.

* * *

Hyman Muss and Abe Guterman, owners of American Can Consolidated, have won scholarships at Columbia and Harvard Law respectively. Nathan Jacobson did fine work at Brooklyn Law; Fetchie Friedman attends N. Y. U.—between meals.

Medicine has attracted Label Izenstein and Archie Kellner. Label found Cincinnati University the most desirable place to study, and Archie's still trying to decide—at the cost of fifty dollars per application.

* * *

Some of the boys are tapping the natural resources of the country for a livelihood. Norman Revel has gone into the oil business in Galveston, and Chink Finerman chose coal as a means of keeping the home fires burning. "Dr." Joseph Lief is digging for a Grecian urn—with a pet of gold inside.

* * *

Eli Levine is working for his doctorate in chemistry at Columbia. Herschel Revel, when last heard from, was advertising for information about dreams—Oh, Mr. Freud!

L. E. E.



TO THE FORLORN

Let no one dare to say
Life is not worth his while;
Nor let him try to say
Destiny's order.
Hope he must have to live,
Trust, and a brave man's smile—
A ray of light to give
Life a new border
Changing one's point of view
Gives all a brighter hue—
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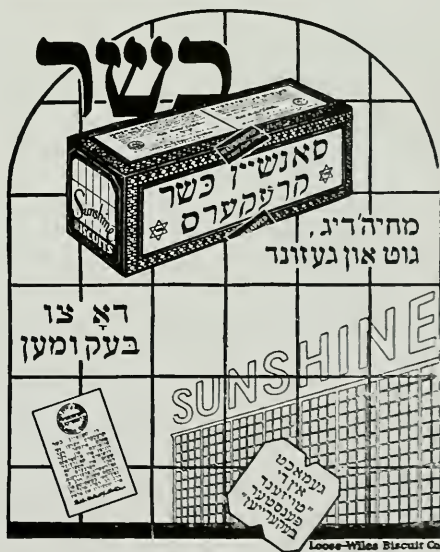
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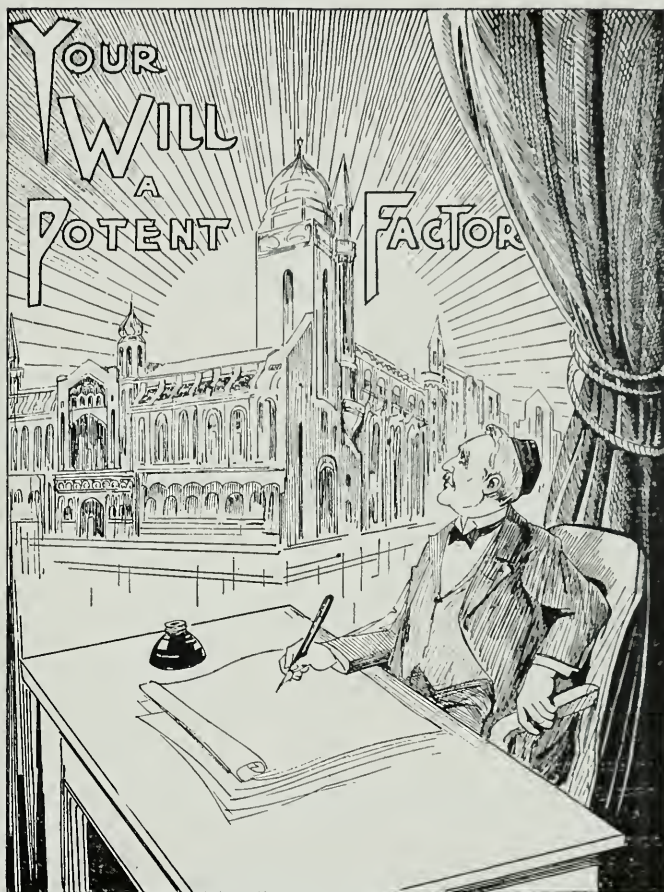
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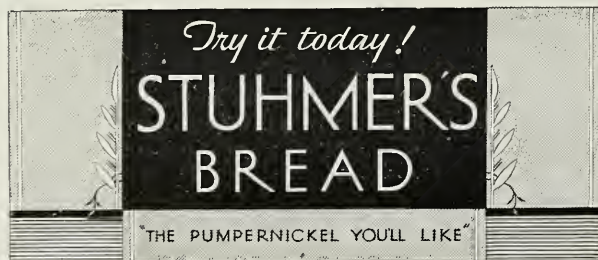
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